SPECTACLES
FOR
YOUNG LADIES;

EXHIBITING

The various Arts made Uſe of for ſeducing YOUNG WOMEN, and the dreadful Conſequences of ſtraying from the Paths of Innocence and Virtue, in a Stile that cannot offend the chaſteſt Ear; and, at the ſame Time that it amuſes with its ſurprizing Variety, conveys Inſtruction by the moſt effectual Method, EXAMPLE.

CONTAINING

The moſt remarkable Hiſtories of the Lives and Actions of thoſe YOUNG WOMEN, who, conſcious of their paſt Guilt, have dedicated the Remainder of their Time to the Service of GOD, and making Atonement, by Repentance, for their paſt Crimes, by retiring from the World to the MAGDALEN-HOSPITAL, London, erected for the Reception of penitent Proſtitutes.

As related by THEMSELVES.

Truſt not a Man, we are by Nature falſe,
Deſigning, cruel, ſubtle, and inconſtant:
If a Man talks of Love, with Caution hear him;
But, if he ſwears, he'll certainly deceive ye. OTWAY.

In TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE HISTORIES Of SOME of the PENITENTS IN THE MAGDALEN-HOUSE.

CHAP. I.

None knew, till guilt created fear,
What darts or poiſon'd arrows were.

ROSCOMMON.

ALL my young acquaintance were continually adviſing me to leave my miſtreſs, and go to London, where I might find out my mother; or, if I failed in that, could not be nearer ſtarving than where I was. They had ſo little notion of the ſize of this metropolis, and the numbers it contains, that they perſuaded me it could be no very difficult matter to find out

Madam Tent; who ſeemed to them, by the accounts of her, to be ſuch a very fine lady, that there could not be many ſuch, even in London.

My ignorance was not likely to be leſs than theirs; ſince I had ſcarcely ever heard the name of the town but from them; and the advice ſo many *good friends* gave me, joined with my diſlike of my place, and the deſire of finding myſelf the daughter of a great Lady, determined me to execute this ſcheme, after I had lived near two years with my miſtreſs.

I was not quite fifteen when I ſet out, without any money in my pocket, but juſt what was neceſſary to pay for my paſſage in the waggon, and my maintenance on the road; for part of which I was obliged to ſome viſitors to my miſtreſs at Chriſtmas; and the remainder was the contribution of thoſe who adviſed me to this ſtep; to whom I was to make a grateful return, when I was ſettled with my *Mamma*. I had ſo little fear of not finding her, that I was not at all diſturbed by the emptineſs of my pocket.

The waggon arrived in London about noon. My poſſeſſions went into ſo ſmall a compaſs, that I carried them with eaſe under my arm; and, as ſoon as I alighted, went the way which chance directed me, enquiring of every body where Madam Tent lived. Some laughed, others anſwered me ſurlily; but as I knew no way of accounting for this behaviour, I did not attribute it to any abſurdity in my queſtion. I ſtrayed in this manner a long time, hoping every good houſe I ſaw was Madam Tent's; but the frequent diſappointments I met with began to diſcourage me.

At laſt, having put the ſame queſtion to a man who ſtood at a ſhop-door, to my great joy he told me

me he knew ſuch an one well enough; but aſked, what Madam Tent I meant? "My mother, an't "pleaſe your Honour," replied I, who took him for a very fine gentleman, never having ſeen even the 'Squire of our pariſh with ſo much lace on his waiſtcoat.

'Oh!' anſwered he, 'then it is the ſame; ſhe 'lives in the next ſtreet: it muſt be her; for ſhe 'is mother to a great many.'

"If ſhe has ſo many children," ſaid I, "it "may be ſhe will not be glad to have any more."

'Never fear,' anſwered the man; 'ſhe will 'hardly refuſe ſuch a daughter as you are: no, if 'there were an hundred like you, they would be 'all welcome: ſhe is mighty good-humoured; 'an excellent kind mother you will find her.'

"Alack, Sir;" I replied, "I am proud to "hear it." And being particularly directed, I went to the houſe; where knocking with much impatience, I ſoon brought a woman to the door, who aſked me, with no very ſmiling countenance, what I wanted? I told her, "Madam Tent." The girl looked very hard at me; and then bidding me come along with her, carried me in to her miſtreſs.

Madam Tent might ſooner claim an air of dignity than of gentility. She was fat, red-faced, and dirty; her cloaths half off, for want of pinning; and, in ſhort, ſo entirely the reverſe of my late miſtreſs, that I found a charm in what would have diſguſted any one elſe. I was ſo much awed by the preſence of ſo great a Lady, as I fancied her, that I ſtood dropping my little country court'ſies at the door, as faſt as could be, without attempting to ſpeak.

The *good* Lady, ſeeing there was no end of my civility, or my ſilence, came up to me, and taking

my hand, and ſmiling with wonderful affability, aſked me if I wanted her? She exhorted me many times not to be aſhamed of telling her what brought me there, before I could get courage to inform her, that, "If I might be ſo bold, "I believed ſhe was my mother." 'Very likely,' replied ſhe, 'my pretty dear; or if I am not al-'ready, I am willing to be ſo; but tell me, my 'love, how I came to be your mother.'

Encouraged by her kind expreſſions, I gave her the beſt account I could of my birth, and of the reſolution I had taken to find out my mother, and how long I had walked about the town before any one would tell me where ſhe lived.

I ſaw my ſuppoſed mother give a ſignificant look at a young woman, who was in the room, which I imagined implied her approbation of my courage in ſeeking her out; and then expreſſing great joy at finding her loſt daughter, embraced and kiſſed me, and told me ſhe would introduce me to a great many ſiſters. Accordingly ſeveral young women were called down, who all received me very kindly, and aſked me many queſtions. I ſaw they were diverted at my anſwers; which I did not wonder at, as I was ſenſible they muſt appear very odd and aukward to ſuch fine ladies.

I need not tell you, that this ſuppoſed mother of mine was an old bawd, whoſe name being the ſame of that I was enquiring for, it was not ſtrange I fell into her hands. But to render the motives for her proceedings better underſtood, I ſhall tell you her views as I go on in my ſtory, tho' I did not know them till ſome time afterwards.

As ſoon as ſhe ſaw me, my extreme youth, my freſh complexion, and the great innocence and ſimplicity of my appearance, made her think me

me no ſmall acquiſition. When ſhe heard what brought me there, ſhe readily acquieſced in the claim I laid to her; and reſolved neither to undeceive me, nor to ſuffer me to be broke of my innocent aukwardneſs, which ſhe thought would be a great charm to many men; and tho' often imitated, yet could never be equalled by any art. For this purpoſe ſhe charged all her young women to avoid every thing that could leſſen my ignorance in any particular, and began to conſider how to turn her young ſavage to the beſt account.

She kept me out of the way of her company, telling me I muſt not appear till ſhe had got me cloaths fit for her daughter; and a mantua-maker was employed to fit ſome ſhe had by her to my perſon. The hopes ſhe had of turning me to her advantage, put her in ſuch good humour, that to appear fond of me was no hard taſk; and I was delighted to find the man's account of her good nature ſo true.

As I perceived an aukwardneſs in my manner and expreſſion, I was deſirous of correcting it, and begged my mother and ſiſters would aſſiſt me in poliſhing myſelf; but my mother charged me to avoid making the leaſt alteration in either; for ſhe ſhould not love me half ſo well, if I was without thoſe peculiarities; and aſſured me they would be looked upon by every one as ſo many graces; for nothing was ſo attracting as novelty. This made me lay aſide my deſign, and conſequently grow inattentive to differences, which had before ſtruck me ſo much; and I indulged my ruſticity without controul.

As ſoon as I was perfectly equipped, I was ſuffered to drink tea in the parlour with the gentlemen who came to the houſe; but was always directed to retire to my room very ſoon afterwards.

terwards. Various reaſons were given me why I ſhould not ſtay; which paſſed upon me for true ones, not having the leaſt notion that I was then only ſhewing to different people, that Mrs. Tent might know who would bid the higheſt for me.

After this manner of proceeding for a few days, my ſuppoſed mother told me, that Mr. Maſtin, one of the gentlemen who had drank tea with us two or three times, had deſired to come that afternoon to ſee me, without going into ſo much company; and therefore I ſhould receive him in my own room.

I expreſſed my ſurprize at his preferring the converſation of ſuch an ignorant unbred girl as myſelf to that of my ſiſters, who were ſo much more genteel and agreeable. She told me my ignorance was my charm; that he was delighted with my innocence, and declared he never ſaw ſo enchanting a young creature. "He is vaſt good," replied I, "to excuſe my aukwardneſs." As this led us into ſome diſcourſe about my ruſticity, I ventured to aſk her "if my ſiſters were not a "little bold; for ſeemingly to me they were "ſometimes a little bold and forward." 'O 'child,' anſwered my mother, 'it is natural you 'ſhould think ſo, having been educated amongſt 'vulgar people; but their behaviour is that of 'perſons of faſhion: all ſuch conduct themſelves 'in the ſame manner.' I begged pardon for my vulgarity; and our converſation was interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Maſtin.

Soon after Mr. Maſtin came, my mother was called out of the room, and we remained *téte à téte*.

Whether he had any doubt about the reality of my ſimplicity, or only an inclination to be convinced of it from my own mouth, I know not; but he

he by queſtions drew from me an account of my whole life, from the firſt of my remembrance: which indeed was no difficult matter; for I was qualified to talk on ſo few ſubjects, that I was very well inclined to make myſelf the topic of my diſcourſe.

Mr. Maſtin ſhewed ſo much compaſſion at any incidents in my relation which implied diſtreſs, and interrupted me by ſo many compliments and tender expreſſions, as pleaſed me much. There is great pleaſure in being loved and pitied. They were both almoſt new to me; and I felt myſelf much obliged to a Gentleman, who, tho' ſo late an acquaintance, ſeemed ſo fond of me.

Mrs. Tent had ſold this interview at a pretty good price, tho' Mr. Maſtin had engaged to forbear ſhocking my vulgar notions, as ſhe expreſſed herſelf, all at once; and accordingly, when the ſtipulated time was expired, ſhe returned to us, and not long after he took his leave, having obtained permiſſion to wait on me next day.

As ſoon as Mr. Maſtin went away, my *mother* aſked me how I liked him; and I replied "Deſ-"perate well: he has the winningeſt ways with "him, ſurely, that ever gentleman had: ſo "humble, that, would you believe it, he kiſs'd "my hand I dare ſay forty times, and ſeemed to "love me as well as if I had been his own "daughter. He called me the ſweeteſt names! "you cannot think how deſperate engaging he "was."

'Good gentleman!' cried Mrs. Tent, 'he is 'indeed mighty ſweet-tempered and obliging, 'and I believe loves you much.' But ſhe could not ſo well compoſe her countenance, as not to let a tendency to ſmile appear on it; which alarming my ſimple pride, as I thought ſhe

laughed at my folly, I aſked what excited it? 'Only, my dear,' replied ſhe, 'to think that 'your ſimplicity ſhould have won the heart of a 'man, that ſo many ladies have been aiming at 'in vain.'

This anſwer pleaſed my vanity too well to leave me any doubt of its being the true reaſon of a ſmile, for which I was inclined to account in a manner leſs civil to myſelf.

CHAP. II.

For what one likes, if others like as well,
What ſerves one will, when many wills rebel?
POPE.

MR. Maſtin came the next day, and was brought up into my room. As the liberty he had purchaſed was more extenſive than the day before, he ſoon ſurprized me by his familiarity; and at laſt I threatened him, that if he did not behave better I would tell my *mother* He deſired I would, and I would learn from her, that there was no impropriety in his behaviour.

Aſhamed of the complaints I had to make, I did not immediately keep my word; but finding I could not make him deſiſt, I told him, that "if he did not mend his manners, I would go "and tell all to my mother." He declared I ſhould not leave him; but was very willing that I ſhould ring the bell, and ſend for her.

I did accordingly; and when ſhe came, I acquainted her with "what a horrid rude man "Mr. Maſtin was; and that he was ſo deſperate "bold

" bold and impudent, I would ſtay with him no
" longer ; and deſired ſhe would ſcold him."

' What for, child ?' ſaid ſhe, with a very diſcontented countenance, having flattered herſelf that the great prejudice I had expreſſed in his favour would have ſecured him an eaſier conqueſt; and that the ſhame I ſhould feel for what I had done, and my deſire of concealing it from her, would have been an additional proof of my ſimplicity, and greatly enhanced my charms. But finding her hopes fruſtrated, ſhe had another reſource. ' What ſhould I ſcold Mr. Maſtin for, ' child ?' ſaid ſhe : ' May not a man take what ' liberties he will with his wife ?'

" With his wife !" interrupted I. " But how " am I his wife ? I never was ſo much as in the " ſame church with him in all my life"

' What is that to the purpoſe ?' replied Mrs. Tent : ' None but low country people make all ' that fuſs about marriage. No other ceremony ' is required among people of faſhion, but for a ' gentleman to tell a lady that he will marry her ' daughter ; and then, if ſhe conſents, they be-' come man and wife.'

" I do not know how that may be," ſaid I ; " but I am ſure 'Squire Scrimſhell's daughter was " married at our church ; and yet ſhe was as fine " a lady as hands and pins could make her ; and " he was a deſperate fine gentleman too."

' Very likely,' replied my *mother* : ' Country ' 'Squires keep to old faſhions ; but people of ' quality have left off making ſuch a buſtle ' about it.'

" I am ſure," added I, " that I remember " poor Suſan Stokes was made to ſtand in a " white ſheet in our pariſh, becauſe ſhe had a " child by a man to whom ſhe had never been

" married in the church? and they had been " aſked out too, which is more than I and Mr. " Maſtin have been; and ſhe was called a ſad " wicked creature by all our neighbours for it. " This I am certain of."

' Very likely,' anſwered Mrs Tent; ' but then ' I warrant you will find the man ſhe had her ' child by had never agreed it with her mother.'

" No indeed, I believe not," replied I; " for " her mother was ſad and angry about it, and " deſperate grieved too, and ſaid ſhe ſhould break " her heart."

' Well, you ſee the difference then,' ſaid Mrs. Tent. ' If I had not given my conſent, ' you could not be Mr. Maſtin's wife; that is the ' very thing which makes you two be married. ' You may take my word ſurely; for you ſee by ' your Suſan's mother what an affliction it is to a ' parent to have a daughter too free with a man ' ſhe is not married to.'

" That is true, indeed," ſaid I: " but are we " then truly and certainly married?"

' Moſt certainly,' anſwered Mrs. Tent. ' Can ' you think I would tell you a lie? I deſire you ' will learn to reſpect your mother more: your ' duty is to believe every thing I ſay, and do every ' thing I bid you, or I ſhall diſclaim you for my ' child: I will harbour no undutiful children.'

" Dear mother, do not be angry," ſaid I half crying; " I will be very dutiful: but how ſhould " I know we were married? You did not tell " me."

' I was wrong there, to be ſure, replied ſhe; ' but I forgot to acquaint you with it, or indeed ' thought Mr. Maſtin would tell you.'

" Would you believe," ſaid I, " that he ne-
" ver ſaid ſo much as one word about it; but
" howſomdever, if he had, I do not think I
" ſhould have believed him."

My ſcruples being ſatisfied, Mrs. Tent left us; and I received Mr. Maſtin's viſits regularly, ſeldom ſeeing any one elſe; for I ſince learnt, that he had made my being kept out of all the company that came to the houſe, one of the articles of his agreement.

This confinement was rather dull; and I told my ſuppoſed huſband, " I wondered he would
" not take me home, for that I thought a wife
" was always to go to her huſband's houſe; that
" I was ſure Miſs Scrimſhell went with her huſ-
" band the very day they were married."

Mr. Maſtin told me, that our *mother* had inſiſted on our making a pretty long ſtay with her; and would not conſent to our marriage on any other terms: for ſhe ſaid, ſhe could not ſo ſoon part with a daughter ſhe had ſo lately found.

I felt myſelf obliged to my *mother* for her love; but had ſo great a notion of the pleaſure of having a houſe and a coach of my own, that I could have excuſed her that proof of fondneſs.

The weather growing fine, Mr. Maſtin carried me out of town for a few days, to a place about twenty miles from London; and by ſuch little excurſions reconciled me the better to ſtaying at my *mother*'s: But buſineſs called him to his country-houſe, where he did not think proper to carry me; and after many charges to my *mother*, to take care of his wife, which were ſtrengthened by many private inſtructions, he left me, with excuſes which tho' he thought plauſible, did not prevent my reſenting his not ſuffering me to accompany him.

When

When Mr. Maſtin had been gone about a week, Mrs. Tent brought up a gentleman to ſee me; and after we had drank tea, left us. He ſoon grew very familiar and impertinent, and gave me great offence. I was ſure I could not be married again without my knowledge, as I had a huſband already; ſo I expreſſed my anger very freely; and Mrs. Tent, who had gone no farther than the next room, came in to pacify me: and upon my complaining that he had attempted to be as familiar as if he was my huſband, ſhe told me there was nothing in that: ladies of faſhion never ſcrupled ſuch things; and that if Mr. Maſtin had had any diſlike to my admitting the courtſhip of others, to be ſure he would not have left me behind him, when it was quite unneceſſary to do ſo. She added, that I expoſed my ill breeding and ignorance by not following the cuſtoms of the world, and doing like other people; and ſhe was aſhamed of ſuch a vulgar-minded daughter; but ſhe ſaw my low education had quite ſpoiled me; that none of my ſiſters would have made any ſuch fooliſh objections.

I was indifferent as to the cuſtoms of people of faſhion in this particular, having no ſort of inclination to take advantage of it; for I found no temptation to imitate them. To have done ſo, I muſt have been intirely actuated by a deſire to be genteel; which was not ſo ſtrong in me, but that I oppoſed compliance from choice as ſtrongly as I could have done from duty; and did not attempt to diſpute the propriety with my *mother*, whoſe aſſertion I could not eaſily credit.

My viſitor, at laſt, tired with my obſtinacy, left me; but renewed his viſits daily; and ſolicitations were always aſſiſted by my *mother*'s importunities, which much leſſened my regard for her: but

but neither prevailing, ſhe brought him up one night after I was in bed and aſleep. Tho' I had little ſenſe either of virtue or duty, conſcience was not ſilent: I felt in my heart, that all my *mother* urged was falſe reaſoning, tho' I was too ignorant and too ſilly to refute her. My tears ſhewed how far I was from being convinced by her; but ſhe had learned to behold ſorrow without feeling the leaſt compaſſion, therefore was not to be moved by ſeeing me weep.

The firſt beginning of a crime is always the moſt grievous. Mr. Maſtin did not return till near a week after; and this gentleman continued his viſits during that time. I was extremely vexed at this circumſtance, tho' not ſo wretched as at firſt. Virtue ſeems to act a little like a coward, and fly precipitately from thoſe who commit one act of hoſtility againſt her.

Mr. Maſtin's arrival was rendered the more agreeable to me for putting an end to the other gentleman's viſits. Tho' my *mother* was laviſh in her aſſurances of the perfect retirement in which I had lived during his abſence, and, as I afterwards learn'd, had proteſted I had not beheld the face of a man from the day he left me; yet Mr. Maſtin was not intirely freed from the apprehenſions which had poſſeſſed him, from the knowledge of her mercenary diſpoſition, and thought he might better depend on my word than hers; therefore he aſked me how far what ſhe ſaid was true.

The morning that Mr. Maſtin returned, Mrs. Tent cautioned me againſt acquainting him with any thing that had paſſed, and added menaces to her prohibition; and enumerated all the ill conſequences that might ariſe from my diſobeying her in this particular.

This

This was a ſufficient proof of the falſe light in which ſhe had repreſented the inconſtancy of which ſhe had perſuaded me to be guilty. I was not ſo very ſilly as to overlook this circumſtance, and it had ſhocked me much: for tho' ſhe had not quite convinced my very weak reaſon before, yet ſhe had confounded it: but now truth broke thro' the cloud of falſehood which had overſhadowed it, and ſhewed me my guilt in its ſtrong colours. But it had not the effect ſhe expected: for inſtead of forcing me to conceal what had paſſed, it made the ſenſe of it ſo heavy a burden, that my heart was glad Mr. Maſtin's inquiries gave me an opportunity of unloading it. I anſwered all Mr. Maſtin's queſtions with a frankneſs and ſimplicity, which pleaded my excuſe better than all the force of rhetoric; but it exaſperated him the more againſt Mrs. Tent. I never ſaw a man more agitated or diſtreſſed than he was. He was for ſome time quite outrageous; and left me to vent his anger on my *mother*; 'till, being tired with ſuch expence of ſpirits, rather than really pacified, he returned to me much more compoſed, and able to enter into farther converſation, tho' it was ſtill on the ſame ſubject.

After having heard all I had to ſay, he told me, that, grievouſly as the thought of what had paſſed tormented him, yet he muſt confeſs he deſerved it; 'for, my dear Fanny,' continued he, 'if I 'had not given into the deceit practiſed upon you, 'and indeed become a principal party in it, I ſee 'by your frankneſs I ſhould not have had any in-'conſtancy to lay to your charge.' He then gave me a full account of the occupation of her whom I took to be my mother, of the reaſon of her ſo readily aſſuming the appearance of ſuch, of her views in preſerving the innocence and ſimplicity which

which I had brought with me to her houſe, of the falſity of her and his aſſurances of our being married; and informed me fully of my true ſituation.

I cried ſadly, to hear I had neither huſband nor mother; not ſo much out of any affection I retained for Mrs. Tent, whoſe vile conduct, thus fully diſplayed, extinguiſhed all regard towards her, as, like Prince Prettiman, from a fear of being no-body's child at all; and I found at the ſame time I was no man's wife. To loſe two ſuch ſupports at one inſtant was a very melancholy circumſtance. I ſobbed out, that "I was afraid "I had been very wicked." Mr. Maſtin removed that apprehenſion with all the fallacious arguments with which he had long blinded his own reaſon and conſcience; tho' they are too poor to appear even ſpecious to a perſon of ſenſe and thought, if paſſion was not the ſupreme judge, to whoſe ſentence they appeal. They might perhaps have impoſed a little time on my folly, had I been leſs prejudiced; but it was ſo much my preſent and moſt apparent intereſt to believe all he urged, that I gave him full credit.

Mr. Maſtin quieted my mind almoſt as eaſily as he had done my conſcience; for by promiſing me an everlaſting conſtancy, and a more than matrimonial love, as he expreſſed himſelf, I began to be leſs concerned that I was not married, and pretty eaſy whether I was any-body's daughter at all, as he engaged to take me from that houſe, and place me in one of my own. His paſſion was rather increaſed by abſence than abated; and he was reſolved to leave me no longer in the hands of a woman, who had ſo manifeſtly broke the truſt repoſed in her. That ſhe did ſo, ſurely is leſs ſtrange, than that a man of ſenſe, who knew

ſhe

ſhe lived by a conſtant practice of breaking thro' all the laws of religion and humanity, ſhould expect ſhe would ſcruple violating her word to one individual.

CHAP. III.

Love is not ſin, but where 'tis ſinful love;
There is a flame ſo holy and ſo clear,
That the white taper *leaves* no ſoot behind.

DRYDEN.

THE next morning, as ſoon as Mrs. Tent was up, Mr. Maſtin told her he was reſolved to take me away; which ſhe obſtinately refuſing to conſent to, with all the rage of a mercenary wretch, who fears being deprived of what ſhe eſteems the moſt valuable property ſhe has; he, by threatening to have her brought to puniſhment, and her houſe ſuppreſſed, and by an offer of ſome money in caſe of a quiet acquieſcence, at laſt prevailed, and carried me off.

I was now placed in a very pretty lodging, ſurrounded with every convenience of life, and introduced into diverſions which gave me both pleaſure and ſurprize. Mr. Maſtin kept me out of all infamous acquaintance; but got his tradeſmen's wives to viſit me; and they were ſo much more genteel than myſelf, that I could not wiſh for higher company; and their converſation wore off ſome of my ruſticity, which ceaſed to pleaſe, when it was no longer a proof of my innocence; that great attraction, which very unnaturally charms thoſe moſt, who are moſt deſirous of deſtroying it.

I lived

I lived in this manner a year and a half, about which time Mr. Maſtin fell in love with another woman, perhaps more engaging, but certainly more new than myſelf. However, he was too good-humoured to tell me this; but complaining our connection was grown too-like matrimony, to which he had a mortal averſion, he fairly acknowledged his reſolution to break it off; but as he would not ſuffer me to be reduced to any diſtreſs, becauſe his paſſion for me was extinguiſhed, he offered to recommend me to his ſiſter, who wanted a ſervant to attend on her perſon; for which office I was grown genteel enough.

I had perceived the decay of Mr. Maſtin's affection with ſome uneaſineſs, tho' without the bitter pangs which thoſe feel at a lover's inconſtancy, who are paſſionately in love with him. I had never conceived a paſſion for Mr. Maſtin: his perſon and manner were agreeable; his age about forty; he had a great deal of complaiſance and good nature, was generous, and fond of me; but had none of the tender delicacies of mind or behaviour which charm even the coldeſt heart. I might more properly be ſaid to be pleaſed with him, than to love him; I was grateful, but not affectionate; my heart was a ſtranger to paſſion.

Tho' I had ſuffered but moderately at ſeeing an abatement in Mr. Maſtin's love, yet I was ſhocked to think of parting with him; wherein perhaps the thought of relinquiſhing the pleaſure and affluence in which I lived, and returning to a ſtate of ſervitude, had not the ſmalleſt ſhare. But as a diſpoſition muſt be extremely ſelfiſh and intereſted that feels very poignant pangs when only convenience is concerned, I was conſoleable; and had not ſo intirely forgot my former condition, as not to

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think myſelf much exalted by that Mr. Maſtin propoſed to me.

After ſome expreſſions of concern, and more tears, I accepted his propoſal without reproaches: for which he acknowledged himſelf obliged; promiſed to be always my friend; to contribute, as far as his convenience would permit, to the advancing of my fortune in any way that ſhould offer; and aſſured me it would be a great ſatisfaction to him to have me placed where he ſhould often ſee me.

Mr. Maſtin recommended me in ſuch a manner the next day to his ſiſter, as ſecured me a favourable reception from her, who knew leſs of her brother's private vices than of his apparent good humour; for he was a man, who was by conſtitution free from every vice but one; and, tho' without any fixed principle, was decent by inclination: this procured him the reputation of a generous, good-humoured, amiable man; and as ſuch he was highly eſteemed by Mrs. Lafew his ſiſter, who was of a very different character.

Mrs. Lafew had an underſtanding ſuperior to her brother's. She was bred up by an aunt, who had been fixed in the country for many years, whoſe life was ſpent in the exerciſe of every Chriſtian virtue: ſhe was the reliever of the poor, the comforter of the afflicted, a nurſe to the ſick, a prudent and faithful adviſer to her neighbours, a guide to the young, a ſupport to the aged, and an inſtructor of the ignorant. The character of Job in his proſperity had been the model on which ſhe had formed her conduct; and ſhe had copied it exactly. Every eye that ſaw her bleſſed her; and the ear that heard her witneſſed to her.

Under the care of ſuch a perſon, it is not ſtrange if Mrs. Lafew, who was naturally of an happy

happy diſpoſition, acquired an uncommon degree of merit; eſpecially as her aunt had always looked on the education of a niece, who was likely to enter into the world in a rank, where, by precept and example, ſhe might be of extenſive ſervice, as one of her moſt uſeful employments.

Mrs. Lafew was naturally of a gentle diſpoſition, which, by her aunt's example, was improved into the moſt engaging ſweetneſs: ſhe was modeſt and humble, ſincere and open, and had found the art of being polite without falſhood. She had every moral virtue heightened by religion into every Chriſtian grace. Her perſon was elegant, and her face handſome, and exactly correſponded with the delicacy of her mind.

Mr. Lafew made his addreſſes to her at a time that her aunt was ſenſible her diſſolution was approaching; and therefore was particularly glad to marry her niece to a man of ſenſe and character, who was paſſionately in love with her; and was the only man ſhe had ever ſeen her niece liſten to with complacency on that ſubject.

Mrs. Lafew had too much ſincerity, and too juſt a ſenſe of the intire confidence ſhe ought to repoſe in her aunt, to conceal from her that ſhe was diſpoſed in Mr. Lafew's favour. The good old lady had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing them united before ſhe died, and giving her bleſſing to a marriage, which promiſed much happineſs to both parties.

This couple had been married about ſix years when I went to live with Mrs. Lafew. They had four children, who were ſo many additions to their felicity, being in every reſpect ſuch as might be expected from the moſt amiable of parents.

Mr. Lafew is, I think, the handſomeſt man I ever ſaw; graceful in every motion, and polite

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and elegant in all his expreſſions. His heart is ſuſceptible of the tendereſt impreſſions, and every look expreſſes his ſentiments in the ſtrongeſt manner. When he married Miſs Maſtin, he loved her with all the paſſion ſhe was ſo well formed to inſpire; and what time had abated in the warmth of his affection, was compenſated by the addition it had made to his eſteem. If her perſon charmed leſs for being grown familiar, her virtues endeared her to him the more the longer he experienced them; and every day diſcovered ſome new excellence, or made thoſe he was before acquainted with ſhine with brighter luſtre.

I do not imagine greater happineſs can be enjoyed in the marriage ſtate, than ſubſiſted between this amiable couple when I entered their family; the pleaſures of mutual love being increaſed by the joy they took in their lovely offspring, which they beheld with equal tenderneſs. My evidence in this caſe is not ſuſpicious; for were it poſſible, I would think otherwiſe. This circumſtance, by increaſing my guilt, adds infinite weight to the burden of my conſcience; which reproaches me hourly for being, like the ſerpent, the deſtroyer of happineſs, and the cauſe of the fall of innocence; a crime which repentance can never expiate. But what bounds can be ſet to infinite mercy! That is the Foundation of all my hopes of pardon; and on what could I ſo properly rely?

Mrs Lafew's ſweetneſs of temper ſecured a favourable acceptance of every attempt to ſerve her; and I found no difficulty in my place, but in anſwering ſuch queſtions as ſhe aſked me in a manner conſiſtent with the account Mr. Maſtin had given of me, and the reaſons for his intereſting himſelf in my welfare. As he had invented a melancholy ſtory of the death of my parents, de-

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orated with many diſtreſsful circumſtances, I found no other means to avoid betraying myſelf, but to appear ſo much affected with the recollection of my misfortunes, as rendered her humanity a bar to her examining me very narrowly about them. It was not difficult for me to ſeem diſtreſſed; for whenever any part of this imaginary ſtory was mentioned, I was ſo terrified with the fear of diſcovering the truth, that the agitation of my mind required but a ſmall addition of art to excite the compaſſion of Mrs. Lafew.

Nor was Mr. Lafew devoid of pity. He ſeemed greatly touched with my diſtreſs, which he obſerved muſt, thro' ſo quick a ſenſibility as appeared in me on theſe occaſions, be always great, tho' I generally had a ſufficient command over myſelf to conceal it.

I am naturally fond of children; and none could be more engaging than Mrs. Lafew's; which attracted me much into the nurſery. My miſtreſs ſaw with pleaſure my attachment to them; as every perſon receives gratification in finding others love thoſe, for whom they feel great tenderneſs: and ſhe likewiſe expreſſed her approbation at my chuſing, young as I was, to be with the children rather than with the ſervants; to many of whom it might naturally be ſuppoſed, my company would not be unacceptable.

By living ſo much in the nurſery, I ſaw a great deal more of my maſter and miſtreſs than I ſhould otherwiſe have done: and as their good opinion of me rendered them particularly obliging, I felt both gratitude and love towards them. The children likewiſe were exceſſively fond of me, as all my leiſure was dedicated to their amuſement.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Shiv'ring death crept cold along his veins;
A gloomy night o'erwhelm'd his dying eyes.

BLACK.

MR. Maſtin often came to ſee his ſiſter; and behaved with ſuch eaſy natural humanity and regard towards me, as would have diſpelled ſuſpicion, if any had been conceived: but none of the family harboured a thought to my diſadvantage, tho' I had not Mr. Maſtin's command of countenance: but the effect his preſence had on me was attributed to baſhful gratitude, not to the ſhame of guilt; and my miſtreſs ſometimes ſeemed apprehenſive that the obligations ſhe imagined I and my family had to her brother, might have awakened rather too tender a ſenſibility in my heart: but this excited her compaſſion, and not her anger. The ſafety of my ſituation, and her great opinion of Mr. Maſtin's honour and integrity, prevented her conceiving any fear of the conſequences, which, with more opportunity, might ariſe from the prepoſſeſſion ſhe imagined I had in her brother's favour.

Mrs. Lafew's behaviour excited my gratitude and affection: but I confeſs I was ſtill more ſenſibly affected both by my maſter's conduct and his perfections. Nature had endowed him with very uncommon charms; and they made a ſtrong impreſſion on my heart, which was till then a ſtranger to love; indeed ſo ignorant about it, that I knew not the nature of my ſenſations. I had not imagined a poſſibility of my being in love with him;

him; and therefore ſuppoſed every one, who knew him as well as I did, muſt be equally attached to him. I found I loved my miſtreſs more becauſe ſhe belonged to him, than for her own merits; and, charming as their children were, nothing endeared them ſo much to me as the conſideration that they were his. Every proof they gave of their affection to him was a new charm to me: but I did not receive the ſame pleaſure from his fondneſs for them: I envied their title to his tenderneſs, and the great ſhare they enjoyed of it; and could not forbear lamenting that I ſtood in none of thoſe near and dear relations to him. But ſtill I would not believe myſelf in love: want of hope ſtifled my paſſion in ſuch a manner, that it might have deceived a perſon leſs ignorant of the human heart than myſelf.

I had lived near a year in this family, diſtinguiſhed by the favour of my maſter and miſtreſs, when the latter was ſeized with a ſcarlet fever, which immediately filled us all with fears for her valuable life. Her phyſician thought her in great danger; and my maſter ſeldom left the room, watching her with the utmoſt tenderneſs.

As ſoon as ſhe was taken ill, ſhe endeavoured to procure the nurſe who uſed to take care of her in her lyings-in; but ſhe being engaged, Mrs. Lafew expreſſed ſo great a diſlike of having one about her whom ſhe knew nothing of, that I undertook to nurſe her. She and Mr. Lafew were both afraid that I had not ſtrength to go thro' ſo much fatigue; but were well inclined to be perſuaded out that fear, as it removed her apprehenſions of a ſtranger.

In conſequence of the office I had undertaken, I ſat up every night with my miſtreſs, and never left her but for two or three hours in the day-time, when my maſter would inſiſt on my retiring to reſt: but I allowed myſelf as little of this refreſhment as poſſible, finding nothing recruit my ſpirits ſo much as being in her room in the day, as my maſter was then almoſt always there; and would often converſe with me, and greatly recompenſe all my fatigue, by the ſtrongeſt expreſſions of his gratitude for my care of his wife, and of the high eſteem I had thereby given him for me.

If the ſmalleſt ray of hope had ever awakened in me an expectation of being regarded for my own ſake, I might perhaps have felt more uneaſineſs than pleaſure in thus gaining conſideration only thro' the love Mr. Lawſew bore another; but it was great gratification to me to obtain it by any means; and I increaſed it by my unaffected grief, when my miſtreſs was pronounced to be in the utmoſt danger. My concern was real, but the cauſe miſtaken; for I confeſs I felt my maſter's extreme affliction more ſenſibly than her danger. While he grieved, I was inconſoleable; and he was charmed with ſuch a proof of my affection for the great object of his.

The next day afforded us ſome comfort by her amendment, and her fever gradually abated; but ſhe remained ſo weak, that her recovery was likely to be very ſlow.

Several of the ſervants caught the infection, and were extremely ill; which gave my maſter an opportuuity of ſhewing his humanity; for he was frequent in his inquiries after them, and viſited them daily, to ſee that proper care was taken of them. He, as well as myſelf, was in conſtant expectation of falling ſick, and only ſolicitous to eſcape

cape the ill effects we had reaſon to fear from our attendance, till Mrs. Lafew was ſufficient y recovered not to ſuffer by our abſence.

Our wiſhes in this reſpect were gratified: but as we grew eaſier on her account, we were alarmed from another quarter. Their eldeſt daughter, who was near four years old, tho' ſhe had, as well as the reſt of the children, been kept out of her mother's room for fear of infection, was taken ill, and the ſcarlet irruption ſoon after appeared. At firſt the Phyſician had good hopes of her; but the fifth day the irruption diſappeared; ſhe was as cold, and almoſt as ſtiff, as marble; and the doctor who was immediately ſent for, thought her in the agonies of death.

Mr. Lafew, who from the time ſhe was taken ill, had divided his time and care between her and her mother, and had wiſhed me to do the ſame, having great confidence in my attachment to her, was ſhocked to the laſt degree, and knew not how to appear with any tolerable chearfulneſs before his wife; who hearing more movement in the houſe than common, and her huſband being abſent, was apprehenſive he was taken ill; and ſo agitated with this notion, that I was obliged to go into the nurſery, to deſire he would repair to her, and quiet her apprehenſions; the only motive which could at that time have prevailed on him to leave his little daughter's bed-ſide.

The phyſician was then declaring the little hope he had of the child's recovery; but turning to the nurſery-maid, told her, that if any thing could reſtore it, it would be going to bed to it, which by warmth might bring out the irruption again. The maid perceived that he applied to her for this purpoſe; but not chuſing the office, which was attended with ſome danger, obſerved,

that no-body could be expected to run ſuch hazard of their lives; for there would be little chance of eſcaping the diſtemper in that caſe: And how dangerous it was no one could doubt, at a time that one of her fellow-ſervants lay dead of it, and another was dying.

My apprehenſions were leſs, as my deſire to ſave the child, and oblige the parents, were greater. I told the doctor I was very ready to try the experiment. He begged then it might be done immediately; and left the room for me to go to bed; which I did directly, and took the child in my arms, laying her cloſe to my boſom.

The doctor returned into the room, waiting the event of this experiment. In this ſituation Mr. Lafew found us, as ſoon as he could get clear from his wife without giving her any ſuſpicions, and indulge his anxious impatience to know whether there was any alteration in his child. The phyſician acquainted him with what had paſſed, and the readineſs with which I had undertaken to try this laſt and only thing he could think of for his little patient's relief. Mr. Lafew was exceſſively affected with this action; ſo much, as to ſhed tears of gratitude and affection at this proof of my generous humanity, as he called it. His words did not expreſs leſs than his tears: His acknowledgements were unbounded, and his praiſes of me ſo exalted, as ſhewed the great value he had ſet on the life I endeavoured to ſave. How nobly was I rewarded! the deadly coldneſs of the poor babe had chilled me; but the inexpreſſible joy I felt from ſeeing him ſo much obliged, and hearing myſelf placed ſo very high in his eſtimation, warmed my heart, and renewed the vital heat, which was ſo much ſuppreſſed by having almoſt a corpſe in my arms.

In about half an hour, the child, whoſe eyes were fixed, began to ſhew ſome ſigns of life; the ſtagnated blood ſeemed to flow again, and the doctor conceived hopes from his preſcription. As for my maſter, he was almoſt diſtracted with joy; he threw himſelf on his knees at the bed-ſide, and catching hold of one of my hands; embraced it; called me "the preſerver of his child, his beſt, "his kindeſt friend:" In ſhort, every thing that an unbounded tranſport could dictate.

Charmed as I was in being thus addreſſed, I was not free from fear, leſt the event ſhould not anſwer the favourable ſymptoms which had thrown the tender parent into ſuch ecſtaſies. But my apprehenſions were vain; for the child revived more and more; and in a few hours the irruption began to appear again, which confirmed all our hopes.

The phyſician was ſo well pleaſed with his ſucceſs, that he intimated a wiſh, that I would not leave the chi'd for ſome time; and accordingly I continued in bed with it for two nights and days, tho' Mr. Lafew oppoſed it, expreſſing his fears of my catching the infection, and that he ſhould at laſt loſe his great benefactreſs, her who had beſtowed the greateſt bleſſing on him; and loſe her by that infinite generoſity to which he owed his darling child.

My miſtreſs was ſo little uſed to my abſence, that ſhe ſoon inquired after me; and being told I was taken ill, and put to bed, ſhe intimated her concern with great humanity, as fearing my illneſs was the conſequence of my attendance on her: But as ſoon as I was releaſed from the child, I waited on her again.

I had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing Miſs Lafew in a fair way of recovery, and of believing myſelf in

great meaſure the occaſion of it. But my joy was ſoon troubled by Mr. Lafew's being ſeized with this cruel fever; which became ſo epidemical, that very few in the family eſcaped it.

CHAP. V.

For, oh! what damned minutes tells he o'er,
Who doats, yet doubts; ſuſpects, yet ſtrongly loves!
SHAKESP.

MY miſtreſs was greatly to be pitied. It was impoſſible to conceal my maſter's illneſs from her, tho' we did not acquaint her how violent his fever was. She was ſo weak, ſhe could not walk alone; and we were ſo continually alarmed with freſh appearances of the irruption, that the phyſician, apprehending a relapſe would be the conſequence of the leaſt cold, would not permit her to be carried out of her room; which however we could not have prevented, if we had not pretended that my maſter declared himſelf ſo ſenſible of the danger ſhe would incur by moving, that nothing would be ſo hurtful to him as her attempting it.

We were reduced to urge this in the ſtrongeſt manner, and to invent a thouſand meſſages from him, when he was incapable of ſending any; for he ſoon became delirious; a circumſtance which, if known to her, might have proved fatal; therefore we were obliged to pretend he was as well as the nature of the diſtemper would permit; the doctor thinking it adviſeable to deceive her as long as was poſſible, in hopes Mr. Lafew might recover; and not let her ſuffer by her fears of an event,

event, which, in her weak ſtate, he thought her unable to ſupport. His fever was indeed exceſſively violent; but the natural ſtrength and goodneſs of his conſtitution gave his phyſician hopes that he might ſtruggle thro' it.

The whole family was in affliction; but no one in it ſurely more to be pitied than myſelf; who tho' overwhelmed with grief, was obliged to go often to my miſtreſs with a chearful countenance, and rack my imagination, which was tormented with a thouſand dreadful phantoms, for pretended meſſages, and every other invention that might ſerve to perſuade her he was in a better way. I do not think I could have ſupported ſo hard a taſk, if my miſtreſs had not required me to be as much as poſſible in my maſter's room, from the great opinion ſhe had of my care and good nurſing; and therefore drove me from her preſence as ſoon as ever I had made my report to her.

Mr. Lafew continued in this condition three days; the greateſt part of which was ſpent by me in tears. He was ſeized at laſt with great ſickneſs and fainting fits; and after lying a little time in appearance ſenſeleſs, and quite without motion, while I was on my knees by his bedſide, weeping with an exceſs of agony, he opened his eyes, and his ſenſes returning, after looking ſteadily at me for about a minute, aſked me, with a broken voice, what was the matter? and, by calling me by my name, ſhewed me he had, at leaſt in ſome degree, recovered his ſenſes, and thereby gave me immediate conſolation.

I thought there was a ſort of preſumption in having ſo ſtrong an affection for one ſo much above me; therefore I could not prevail on myſelf to anſwer my maſter's queſtion with entire veracity; yet I accounted ſo poorly for my grief,

that he could not long doubt the cauſe. He inquired how long he had been ill; and found that he had been delirious. I could not give him a detail of his illneſs without freſh tears, which ſufficiently explained the former. 'My deareſt 'Fanny,' ſaid he, 'my guardian angel, how can 'I ever reward ſuch goodneſs?' Laying his hand on mine, which, without knowing what I did, I preſſed to my lips, and wept over it. 'Tender-'eſt, moſt enchanting creature!' cried Mr. Lafew, with a faint voice; and, taking my hand, returned the kiſs, I had in a manner involuntarily given his.

This firſt exchange of careſſes between us at once opened my eyes; the appearance of tenderneſs in him rendered me ſenſible how much I was in love. This ſenſe made me retire from his bedſide; and, like our firſt parents, I was taught ſhame by want of innocence.

Mr. Lafew called me back, to aſk me after the healths of his wife and children; and when his mind was made eaſy about them, he fell aſleep, and did not wake till the doctor came; who was agreeably ſurpriſed to find his ſenſes returned, and his fever much abated. We informed my miſtreſs of his amendment; but ſtill without letting her know how ill he had been. He kept his bed a conſiderable time longer, before his fever would leave him; and my attendance continued; but without the pain which had at firſt accompanied it; for I ſaw him recover every day; and every hour brought me ſome proof of his regard and affection for me. But even this, great as the pleaſure was, could not prevent me from beginning to ſink under the fatigue of body, and anxiety of mind, which I had undergone: But while it was poſſible to keep up,

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I could not give way to what muſt deprive me of the ſight of my maſter; and ſo great power had this conſideration, that I continued the duties of my place till he was able to go into my miſtreſs's apartment: For tho' he was the laſt of the two that was taken ſick, he was well much before her.

When I was no longer able to conceal my illneſs, no doubt was made but that it was the conſequence of the infection, and I was put to bed; where I continued four days without any appearance of irruption; and grew ſo much better, that my diſorder was judged only the effect of fatigue; which was really the caſe, and reſt ſoon recovered me.

When I was firſt taken ill, no one could think it ſtrange my maſter came to ſee me, as he made it his cuſtom to viſit every ſervant that was ſick, when my miſtreſs was not able to do it. To them he was humane; but to me he was tender. He appeared wretched, as he expreſſed himſelf, with the ſuppoſition, that after having ſo long eſcaped the infection, I ſhould at laſt catch it of him. He could ſit by my bed-ſide for an hour at a time, lamenting his ill fortune, and accompanying his words with the tendereſt careſſes. It was in vain that I aſſured him my diſorder was only the conſequence of fatigue, and that I felt no ſymptoms of the fever which had been ſo general: I could not quiet his apprehenſions; which would have given me more concern, if I had not owed to them the pleaſure of knowing that gratitude had begot a ſofter paſſion, and that I was tenderly beloved.

Tho' Mr. Lafew had made ſo ſtrong an impreſſion on my heart, yet I am convinced the affection would never have become reciprocal

without this unhappy illneſs; wherein I had ſo many opportunities of recommending myſelf to him, and of making myſelf an intereſt in his heart, by exciting his gratitude.

No other means, I am well perſuaded, could have overcome his fondneſs for his wife. It is true, ſhe had ſome claim too on the ſide of gratitude, for a ſeries of actions ariſing from the moſt entire affection, and every proof of the moſt ſolid merit: But one circumſtance made an eſſential difference; the virtues of a woman, whoſe perſon has been long in a man's poſſeſſion, will excite his eſteem; and, in Mr. Lafew's caſe, I might almoſt ſay his veneration; but the merit of a pretty woman, whom he has never poſſeſſed, gives riſe to warmer paſſions. In one caſe, gratitude is the foundation of regard; in the other, of love.

Perhaps I might, with a great deal of truth, ſtate the difference between myſelf and Mrs. Lafew more to her advantage, and attribute the riſe of Mr. Lafew's paſſion for me as much to a perſuaſion of my frailty, as gratitude for the obligations he was pleaſed to think I had conferred on him. Had he been influenced only by the latter, his affection would never have led him beyond the bounds of virtue; but after eſteeming me for actions which he thought the reſult of generoſity and humanity, the knowledge of my love for him, which was too apparent, extinguiſhed his eſteem, while it excited his tenderneſs; and the affection which was founded on my apparent virtues, increaſed on the appearance of a weakneſs, which probably would change them all into vice. By falling lower in his opinion, I roſe in his love: A change which ſhould have mortified my pride, while it ſoothed my paſſion. But

there

there is ſome degree of virtue in that pride which riſes from an eſteem for virtue; and I had none of either; for

She muſt be humble, who will pleaſe:
And ſhe muſt ſuffer, who will love.

PRIOR.

Tho' ſickneſs gave riſe to all tenderneſs of intercourſe between Mr. Lafew and myſelf, inſtead of ceaſing with it, it increaſed daily; and continued undiſcovered 'till I proved with child.

My miſtreſs was of ſo open and ſo generous a nature, that even love could not render her ſuſpicious; and our intercourſe remained for ſome time a ſecret to her; till the nurſery maid, who had never forgiven my ſhewing more affection for Miſs Lafew than ſhe had done, having diſcovered a private correſpondence between us, imparted it to my miſtreſs, who reſented the calumny, as ſhe called it, to the malicious girl; appeared very angry with her inſolence, in daring to hint that her maſter was guilty of any fault; and reproved her, for throwing aſperſions on a ſervant, who deſerved ſo much from her and Mr. Lafew, that no diſtinction they could either of them ſhew her was equal to her merits.

The girl, piqued with ſo different a reception from what her meanneſs had made her expect, replied, "She did not know, indeed how great "Mrs. Fanny's merits might be; but ſhe was "ſure ſhe was with child."

This aſſertion ſtartled my miſtreſs, who at firſt really hoped all the girl ſaid aroſe from envy; but ſhe had herſelf obſerved an alteration in my complection and countenance, and recollected ſome of my complaints, which bore a reſemblance to

thoſe of a breeding woman; but ſhe ſhewed no emotion before her informer, except that of anger at her inſolence, and commanded her to leave the room.

When Mrs. Lafew was left alone, ſhe revolved over all the circumſtances that occurred to her remembrance. Suſpicion was now awakened, and ſhe found ſufficient reaſon to believe the account ſhe had received was true. The attachment which Mr. Lafew had to me was ſo viſible, that it had not paſſed unobſerved by my miſtreſs; but the generous confidence ſhe had in his affection and integrity, led her to attribute it all to gratitude; and ſhe admired him the more for that proof of his ſenſibility.

To attempt to deſcribe what ſhe felt on this occaſion, as I learned it afterwards, would be too painful a taſk to me, who muſt all the time be filled with the moſt ſevere ſelf-reproaches; but it may be in ſome meaſure conceived, by whoever conſiders that her happineſs conſiſted in her huſband's affection for her; that from the tenderneſs and conſtancy of his love, ſhe had enjoyed for ſome years the moſt perfect bliſs this world can afford; a degree of felicity too great to be laſting here; and that at once ſhe ſaw herſelf deprived of it. Nor had ſhe the uſual relief of anger; for he had behaved ſo well to her, even ſince his affection was placed on a new object, that ſhe felt herſelf indebted to his humanity, and was ſenſible that a great degree of virtue was requiſite to preſerve him from a temptation which attacked him on the ſide of gratitude and generoſity.

As ſoon as Mrs. Lafew could ſufficiently compoſe her agitated mind, ſhe made a pretence for calling me. While I remained employed in what ſhe had ſet me to do, ſhe aſked me ſeveral queſtions,

queſtions, which ſhe thought might tend to the ſatisfying her doubts: Nor was ſhe miſtaken; for they appeared to me the reſult of ſuſpicion; wherein I was confirmed, by an air of diſtreſs and inward agony, which overſpread thoſe features that uſed to expreſs nothing but tranquil happineſs and grateful love. This apprehenſion threw me into a confuſion apparent in every thing I ſaid; and I got out of her preſence as ſoon as I poſſibly could: Nor did ſhe wiſh to detain to me; for I had ſo confirmed her doubts, that ſhe was no leſs deſirous of my abſence, in order to have free liberty to indulge her grief.

The firſt time I ſaw Mr. Lafew afterwards, I communicated my apprehenſions to him; but he aſſured me they were ill grounded; for he had juſt left his wife, whom he never ſaw more placid and affectionate, tho' much indiſpoſed. This, I replied, was no confutation; for ſhe was not of a diſpoſition to break forth into rage and reproaches. He allowed the truth of what I ſaid; but thought it impoſſible for a woman of her frank and tender temper to conceal any thing that much affected her; beſides, that, gentle as ſhe was, ſhe could not in ſuch a caſe be ſo void of reſentment, as to treat him with her uſual affection.

I was glad to be perſuaded out of my apprehenſions, and helped to deceive myſelf. However, Mr. Lafew obſerved, that as the conſequence of our mutual love could not long remain undiſcovered, it was neceſſary I ſhould leave the houſe; and he thought I could have no pretence ſo good as the declining ſtate of my health.

This being agreed upon, the firſt time I could get courage to do it, I told my miſtreſs that my health grew ſo bad, that, with the utmoſt concern, I ſaw it neceſſary to leave the beſt of miſtreſſes,

being

being no longer able to perform the duties of my place.

Mrs. Lafew diſtreſſed me, by replying, that I ſhould not leave her on that account; for ſhe thought herſelf too much obliged to me to require any ſervice from me; and would take a ſervant, that I might live there without having any thing to attend to but my health; which ſhould receive all the aſſiſtance the beſt advice and tendereſt care could give it.

This would have been her real wiſh, had ſhe believed me ſincere; and her generous mind, unwilling to condemn me entirely, imagined infinite pleaſure from my accepting this offer, as it would have removed her ſuſpicions, and gratified her generoſity.

I knew not what to ſay: Such goodneſs in one from whom I ſo ill deſerved it, increaſed my confuſion; and for ſome time I could make no reply. A tear of compunction ſtole down my cheeks, but not unobſerved, nor unaccompanied; for my miſtreſs's eyes followed the example of mine, and overflowed with a mixture of grief and compaſſion for what ſhe ſaw I ſuffered. At laſt, I ſtammered out, that I hoped change of air might do me good; and therefore, with her leave, would go to my friends in the country, for a time at leaſt.

At this inſtant my maſter entered the room. My miſtreſs informed him of what had paſſed: He pretended to agree with her in the offer ſhe had made me; but with ſo ill a grace, and in ſo faint a manner affected to preſs me to ſtay with them, that a child muſt have ſeen thro' it. However, his wife pretended to think him in earneſt; and when he ſaid, that "ſince I was reſolved to try change of air, he hoped that, if I recovered my health by it, or found it of no uſe, in either caſe I would return to them, and afford them the gratification of contributing

"all in their power to the eaſe and welfare of one, to "whom they owed the life of their child, and "in great meaſure their own." The cloſe of this ſentence was pronounced with ſuch warmth, and ſo lively an expreſſion in his eyes, that had all he ſaid been accompanied with the ſame air, his wife would almoſt have thought him ſincere: But the change in his manner only ſerved to ſhew her that he was ſenſibly affected by thoſe circumſtances, that the mention of them entirely got the better of his confuſion.

CHAP. VI.

To threats the ſtubborn ſinner oft is hard;
Wrapt in his crimes, againſt the ſtorm prepar'd:
But when the milder beams of mercy play,
He melts, and throws, his cumb'rous cloak away.
DRYDEN.

AS ſoon as Mrs. Lafew had got another ſervant, I took a place in the ſtage-coach which went neareſt the place I had ſaid I was going to; and having taken leave of my miſtreſs the night before, and promiſed to return to her as ſoon as was conſiſtent with my health, I went out in the morning at the proper hour; but, inſtead of going to the coach, haſtened to a houſe which Mr. Lafew had taken for me. It was very ſmall, but clean and neat; and he had placed a ſervant there ready to attend me.

I could not be ſo inſenſible to my miſtreſs's goodneſs, as not to feel ſome remorſe for having thus ſtepped in between her and felicity; and ſhould have grown melancholy with the reflection, had not Mr. Lafew relieved me from it pretty ſoon, by

by coming to inquire how I liked my habitation; which he was impatient to know, as well as to ſhew me the neceſſity of the reſtraint he laid himſelf under ſome days before I left his houſe, fearing that I might attribute his caution to coldneſs.

As I now enjoyed a great deal more of his company, and that without alarms or apprehenſions of diſcovery, I grew ſtill fonder of him, and happier in my ſituation; conſequently, thought leſs of the injury I had done his wife; for when our own hearts are at eaſe, we are apt to attend too little to the ſufferings of others.

A very beautiful boy was added to our ſociety, and compleated my happineſs. I am afraid I muſt not apply that word to us both: Mr. Lafew was too ſenſible of his ingratitude to the beſt and moſt lovely of wives, to be ſatisfied with the part he acted. When he ſeemed moſt delighted with me, he would utter a ſelf-reproaching ſigh; and often told me, that tho' he ſtill retained for his wife the ſtrongeſt affection that the moſt perfect eſteem could give, yet he ſhould be glad never to ſee her; for he could no longer behold her without the greateſt uneaſineſs, knowing how little he deſerved her goodneſs. I am afraid it is not uncommon for people to attempt to make themſelves eaſy by removing the ſenſe of their guilt, rather, than by relinquiſhing their crime; and the only conſequence of their concern for having done an injury to another, is their adding farther injuries to that which the recollection of gives them pain.

Mr. Lafew flattered himſelf, that his lady was ignorant of his connexions with me; and it was not my intereſt to expreſs my ſuſpicion of the contrary, any more than it was for my peace to believe it; ſince I could not reflect on the probability of it without great uneaſineſs. Mr. Lafew often

ſpoke

ſpoke with concern of the bad ſtate of her health, and the effect it had on her ſpirits; but as ſhe never hinted at any apparent decay in his affections, nor at any ſuſpicions of his inconſtancy, or ever appeared the leaſt out of temper; but when he had been the longeſt abſent from her, received him with the greateſt tenderneſs and complacency; he thought it impoſſible but ſhe muſt be entirely ignorant of the whole tranſaction.

I wiſhed to be as well convinced of the truth of Mr. Lafew's opinion, as he was: But tho' I was ſenſible ſuch a degree of patience was far above me, yet I had ſo high a veneration for Mrs. Lafew, that I could not think her incapable of it; and therefore had ſome painful doubts and fears on the ſubject; which, however, I concealed from Mr. Lafew, leſt his affection for his wife, if it had compaſſion on its ſide, might get the better of his paſſion for me.

I had lived above a year in this manner with Mr. Lafew, when he was obliged to go into Cumberland, to look after an eſtate he had there, his ſteward being juſt dead. This ſeparation gave me great concern, tho' I received all poſſible alleviation from a conſtant and frequent correſpondence by letters. But before he had been gone a month, I was ſeized with a fever.

When I found myſelf extremely ill, I ſent for the phyſician who attended Mr. Lafew's family while I nurs'd them; he being the only one of the faculty of whom I had any knowledge, and his conduct had given me a confidence in his ſkill. Of his behaviour to myſelf I was not long a judge; for the fever affected my head ſo much, that I became delirious the ſecond day of his attendance, and remained ſo for above a week; when, recovering my ſenſes, the firſt object I beheld was Mrs. Lafew at my bed-ſide. There

There was not perhaps a ſight in the world which could have ſhocked me ſo much; for what is ſo painful as to look on thoſe whom we have injured! I hid my head from her benign countenance, and was ready to die with ſhame and remorſe. It threw me into an agitation of mind and body, which alarmed her, as well as thoſe who attended me; tho' no one but herſelf gueſſed the reaſon of it. She endeavoured to compoſe my mind, by every ſoothing expreſſion and kind attention the moſt perfect humanity could dictate; which drawing a flood of tears from my eyes, quieted my ſpirits, and a day or two made great amendment in me.

I then began to enquire of Mrs. Lafew to what I owed her charitable viſits; and received the following account in anſwer.

One of Mrs. Lafew's children was, at the time I fell ill, under the care of the phyſician I ſent for; and he went there directly from me the ſecond day of his attendance. In the courſe of the converſation he had with Mrs. Lafew, he told her, that he had juſt left the young woman, who had ſo carefully and tenderly nurſed her and her family, when they were ſo ſeverely afflicted with a ſcarlet fever; adding, that my behaviour then had given him ſuch a regard for me, that he was ſhocked at my being in ſo bad a way.

Mrs. Lafew hereupon inquired particulars? and found he thought me in the utmoſt danger. She aſked him, whom I had about me; to which he replied, nobody but a very young girl, and a very ordinary ſervant, who let him in: He added that he wiſhed he knew where my relations lived; for better attendance was neceſſary, and he muſt be obliged to ſeek out for a nurſe for me himſelf, tho' he much diſliked the office, if he could meet with no one elſe who would take that care.

Mrs.

Mrs. Lafew, after a little pauſe, ſaid, ſhe would ſave him that trouble; aſſuring him ſhe would go directly to my houſe; for ſhe was much care in my debt. After informing her of the place of my abode, he left her, and ſhe came to me, whom ſhe found intirely delirious, and as ill attended as my doctor had repreſented.

My little boy was juſt beginning to walk, and was then going round the room with the aſſiſtance of the chairs, taking hold of each as a ſupport in his little progreſs; but at the ſight of a ſtranger, tottered to me, as to one by whom he expected to be defended from all danger; for a new perſon was a very formidable ſight to him, being naturally of a ſhy diſpoſition, and that increaſed by not ſeeing any variety of people; which the retired life I led prevented.

Mrs. Lafew was variouſly affected with the ſight of my child; ſhe could not behold a deſcendant from Mr. Lafew, and one too who reſembled him extremely, without tenderneſs: but when ſhe conſidered him as a proof of her huſband's attachment to another woman, and his inconſtancy to her, it ſhocked her ſeverely; however, her tender ſentiments prevailed, and the diſtreſs the poor babe appeared in, at meeting with a total diſregard from *her* whoſe great pleaſure it had been continually to fondle him, moved Mrs. Lafew's compaſſion. I was then ſo void of ſenſe, as not to know even my dear child, tho' I had preſerved that knowledge after all other had left me.

Mrs. Lafew endeavoured to prevail on the poor boy to come to her, and by all the bribery of ſugar-plums and ſweet-meats, prevailed in her next viſit. She engaged her own nurſe to attend me, and never failed coming every morning and evening

evening to ſee that all poſſible care was taken; and would often ſit a conſiderable time by me, before I recovered ſenſe enough to know her.

She ſaw two letters on the table, which came by different poſts after my delirium began: She perceiving by the hand they were from Mr. Lafew, but unopened, gave them to my maid, to keep till I aſked for them, and then to deliver them.

I had not long recovered my ſenſes before I enquired if there were no letters for me; and thoſe which were hereupon given me were my beſt cordials; tho' the laſt expreſſed an uneaſineſs at not hearing from me, which put me under a great difficulty; and the next poſt increaſed it, by bringing me much more to the ſame purpoſe. I was ſo weak, that to hold a pen was an utter impoſſibility; my maid could not write, my doctor, or my nurſe, I could not truſt, as they might inform Mrs. Lafew of my requeſt This really diſtreſſed me greatly: I could not tell how to ſupport the vexation of prolonging the extreme anxiety which Mr. Lafew, by his letters, appeared to feel; nor could I ſuſpect the truth of his expreſſions; and yet I was incapable of removing them.

From this dilemma I was delivered by the laſt perſon from whom I expected ſuch a ſervice. Mrs. Lafew having privately inquired, whether I had aſked for my letters, and being anſwered in the affirmative, and that I had received another by that day's poſt; ſhe told me, that ſhe underſtood I had had my letters, which ſhe ordered to be put ſafely by for me, till I was able to read them.

This implying an intimation that ſhe had ſeen her huſband's letters, and ſo generouſly left them untouched, filled me with confuſion, and painful remorſe,

remorſe, which drew ſome tears from me. Mrs. Lafew, who meant to comfort rather than afflict me, and thought me then able to bear the ſubject, with the greateſt gentleneſs, and even an air of tenderneſs, deſired me not to be ſhocked at what ſhe had ſaid; for ſhe meant not to reproach me; on the contrary, her deſign was to relieve me. She had been reflecting on the uneaſineſs Mr. Lafew muſt be under at not hearing from me, as ſhe plainly ſaw, by the frequency of his letters, how conſtant our correſpondence was; and ſhe could not ſupport the notion of his ſuffering any pain, tho' perhaps ſhe did not ſeem the perſon to whoſe pity he was beſt intitled; but that, whatever ſhe endured, ſhe could not let him feel an uneaſineſs, from which it was in her power to relieve him.

The laſt part of this ſentence was uttered with many tears, which affected me beyond expreſſion; and I was ſo unable to gueſs her meaning, that I could make no anſwer.

Mrs. Lafew then aſked me, if Mr. Lafew expreſſed no apprehenſions at having been ſo long without hearing from me; and finding me unwilling to reply, ſhe intreated me to tell her plainly; and, to encourage me to do ſo, took hold of my hand, aſſuming a ſmiling countenance, and an air of affection, while her eyes ran over with tears.

I ſhould have thought myſelf unpardonably ungrateful to a goodneſs I had already too much offended, if I had any longer reſiſted her intreaties; and frankly confeſſed, that Mr. Lafew expreſſed more anxiety on my account, than ſuch a wretch as I was could deſerve from any one. Nor did I herein affect humility; Mrs. Lafew's ſuperior conduct had ſo truly humbled me, that I

ſaw

ſaw myſelf the vileſt and moſt deſpicable of the creation.

Mrs. Lafew replied, that ſhe knew the ſtrength and tenderneſs of his affections too well to doubt of it; and, as I was incapable of writing, ſhe would, if I choſe it, diſguiſe her hand in ſuch a manner, that he ſhould not diſcover it, rather than Mr. Lafew ſhould continue to ſuffer by his anxiety, or that I ſhould expoſe his failings by employing any other perſon to write for me.

This offer ſurprized me extremely. How few women are there, who would not have thought with pleaſure on the pain their huſband ſuffered from his love for another? Nor are there many more, whoſe delicacy, in regard to their huſband's honour, would have induced them to undertake ſuch an office. It is eaſy to imagine I was not backward at accepting an offer which gave ſo much relief to my mind, in affording me a means of abating Mr. Lafew's uneaſineſs; and I was under no apprehenſions of his diſcovering the hand I employed, as no reſemblance of his wife's could poſſibly perſuade him that it was really her's.

Mrs. Lafew deſired me to dictate to her. When I had ſuch a ſecretary, my expreſſions could not fail of being much conſtrained: I could not aſk her to tranſmit any tender ſentiments from me to her huſband; therefore I gave her no very tedious taſk; only deſiring her to thank him for his kind anxiety; to let him know the occaſion of it, and of the great amendment of my health; excuſing the conciſeneſs of my letter, on being obliged to the aſſiſtance of a friend, for the power of giving him that ſhort information about me. This, I hoped, would account for the cold anſwer I returned to three moſt affectionate letters, which,

which, becauſe of the tenderneſs of their contents, I did not ſhew to Mrs. Lafew; nor did ſhe hint at a deſire to ſee them. I believe ſhe was too prudent to wiſh it; for her ſenſibility on that ſubject appeared plainly in the tears which trickled down her cheeks all the time ſhe was writing for me; for all her endeavours could not conceal them. But notwithſtanding the pain it gave her, ſhe repeated it every poſt-day, till I was able to hold my pen.

CHAP. VII.

——— Heav'n has but
Our ſorrow for our ſins, and then delights
To pardon erring man: Sweet mercy ſeems
Its darling attribute, which limits juſtice;
As if there were degrees in Infinite;
And Infinite would rather want perfection,
Than puniſh to extent.

DRYDEN.

I Several times aſked Mrs Lafew, how it was poſſible for her to forgive the injury I had done her, as ſhe ſeemed to do; and not to hate, inſtead of pitying me for any thing I ſuffered. She declined anſwering me, till I was much recovered; and then, on my repeating the queſtion, replied, "I will not pretend to ſay, that if I had "ſeen you in no other light than the object of "my huſband's tendereſt affections, and the "cauſe of his inconſtancy, I could have thought "you more worthy of my compaſſion than of my "reſentment; but as gratitude had taught me to

"love

" love you enough to be ſincerely intereſted in " your welfare, my own misfortune did not en- " groſs all my thoughts. I conſidered what I ſuf- " fered was but for a time. You indeed ſeemed " to have a preſent advantage over me; but how " dreadful were the threatened conſequences! " The ſhort triumph of a few years muſt, if un- " repented of, be ſucceeded by eternal miſery. " The heart muſt be very hard, which in ſuch a " ſituation, could be void of compaſſion for one, " who poſſibly might be on the brink of the moſt " dreadful eternity, but from whom, at leaſt, it " could not be far diſtant; for the longeſt life is " ſhort while paſſing, and ſtill ſhorter in reflec- " tion.

" I acknowledge," continued ſhe, " that Mr. " Lafew was the more immediate object of my " concern, as he was moſt dear to me; and ſo " great have been my apprehenſions for him, that " I can with truth ſay, I have ſuffered much more " on his account than on my own. All my world- " ly happineſs is indeed come to its period; but " death promiſes me certain relief; it may for " ſome years delay its healing balm; but at laſt " it will not fail of yielding me a certain cure. " But this unavoidable event opens to the adul- " terer an horrid ſcene; and he, whoſe conſcience " has inflicted already frequent pains, will find, " that ſmall is the part which guilt has thus anti- " cipated, in compariſon of thoſe to which he " will then be awakened."

This laſt ſentence was interrupted by many tears: She fell into ſuch extreme agonies of mind, that it was long before ſhe could grow ſufficiently compoſed to reſume the ſubject; nor was I capable of ſoliciting her to continue it; for her words had filled me with a horror I had never before felt,

felt. However, as ſoon as Mrs. Lafew was able, ſhe thus proceeded.

" Tho' you had had but a ſmall ſhare in my " thoughts before, and I hoped for ſome mercy " for you on acoount of the greatneſs of the " temptation (for I was convinced no common " ſhare of religion and virtue could reſiſt Mr. La- " few's ſuperior power to charm;) yet, when I " heard that you were on the brink of appearing " before HIM, whoſe moſt ſacred laws you had " violated, I perceived, that what I had called " hopes in your favour, aroſe only from my in- " difference to you, which the nearneſs of the " danger removed; and my compaſſion for you " was ſtrongly excited by your condition. Every " moment threatened you with a dreadful change; " a removal from a ſtate of worldly pleaſure " to an eternity of pains. How great an object " of pity was the perſon now become, whom I " had ſometimes been tempted to envy, till I re- " flected on the greater elegibility of my own ſi- " tuation, with mortified affections, diſappoint- " ed love, but a clear conſcience; than that of " one whoſe pleaſures muſt be embittered with " ſelf-reproaches here, and puniſhed with un- " ſpeakable torments hereafter!

" Who could forbear to compaſſionate a per- " ſon in your deplorable condition? Certainly " not one who had experienced the good effects " of your humanity. I immediately reſolved " to ſee that all poſſible care was taken of you, " and to attend you aſſiduouſly, tho' I could " do little more than pray for your recovery " and repentance. Without the latter, the firſt " could be no benefit to you; it would be " adding only a greater weight of guilt to

" your

" your paſt crimes. But that I muſt leave to " HIM, who alone can change the heart: My " buſineſs was to ſee that all human means were " tried to preſerve your life, and thereby give " you time to expiate your offences by peni- " tence."

Tho' I had never heard the actions I had been guilty of repreſented in ſo ſerious a light, yet conſcience, now for the firſt time ſeriouſly awakened, bore witneſs to the truth of all Mrs. Lafew aſſerted. It is not eaſy to imagine how much I was affected with what ſhe had ſaid. I was too much agitated to purſue the ſubject; but the next day I aſked her, if ſhe was not peculiarly ſerious in her way of treating what I had hitherto heard called by no worſe name than that of gallantry.

Mrs. Lafew, upon my putting this queſtion, told me, " that whatever names might be given " to our actions here, they would not be judged " hereafter by fallacious appellations appropria- " ted to them in this world: That the Bible was " given us as the rule of our faith, and guide of " our actions, by Him who would judge us ac- " cording to our conformity to it; and there- " fore from it we muſt learn the true nature of " them."

She then began with a ſummary account of the Chriſtian revelation, and inſtructed me in all the fundamentals of religion, of which I had before but a ſcanty knowledge. From this time ſhe paſſed every day with me; and read, and, where my ignorance rendered it neceſſary, explained the ſcriptures to me. In them I did indeed find my own condemnation; and was ſo terrified at my ſituation, that Mrs. Lafew feared ſhe had brought me to deſpair, rather than to repentance. She referred

referred me for hope to the ſame book which had deprived me of it, and, by producing to me all the paſſages which promiſed forgiveneſs to repenting ſinners, ſhe convinced me, from the whole tenor of the New Teſtament, that I was within the reach of mercy.

I ſtood too much in need of it to ſlight the call, and determined no longer to continue my courſe of life. Apprehenſions of the conſequences of my love for Mr. Lafew abated my paſſion; and my affection led me to be as deſirous of his reformation as of my own. Could I have overcome the ſenſe of my guilt as an adultereſs, I felt myſelf ſo greatly indebted to Mrs. Lafew, for her care both of my temporal and eternal welfare, that I could not have continued in a conduct which muſt render her unhappy.

My reſolution was firmly fixed; but I conſidered Mr. Lafew was abſent; I feared the ſight of him might again waken all my frailty; and therefore wiſhed to put a relapſe out of my power. For this reaſon I rejected all Mrs. Lafew's offers of ſettling me in a ſtate of eaſe and plenty at a diſtance from any abode of theirs. I feared myſelf; and was apprehenſive that Mr. Lafew might be diſpleaſed with his wife, if he thought ſhe was privy to my concealment; and might think me grown rather indifferent than penitent, and more prevailed upon by the temptation of eaſe, than by a ſenſe of my crime.

As I was no enemy to employment, and wiſhed for a ſociety which ſhould confirm me in my reſolutions, I determined to enter into this Aſylum; Mrs. Lafew engaging to take care of my boy, and to bring him often to ſee me.

My letters had from the firſt of this alteration in my mind, borne the ſigns of it. Melancholy

took the place of the paſſionate expreſſions with which they uſed to be filled; and I frequently intimated my compunction for our paſt way of life. When I had ſettled my plan, I wrote an account of all that had paſſed, and the effect it had had upon me; intreating him not to grieve for the loſs of me, but for the danger in which his eternal welfare had been involved with mine. I expatiated on the great obligations we both had to Mrs. Lafew; informed him of the perfect knowledge ſhe had had of our intercourſe, almoſt during the whole courſe of it; and was not ſilent on the great merit of her behaviour on the occaſion. I added, that I had committed our dear child to her care, and was reſolved to devote the reſt of my life to penitence.

This letter, as ſoon as finiſhed, I diſpatched to him. With what money I had, I defrayed my lodgings, and paid off my ſervants; and, after taking what I hoped would prove but a ſhort farewel of my darling infant and Mrs. Lafew, I came hither, and was moſt charitably accepted.

This lady is the perſon who has been twice to viſit me; and the boy which came with her is the object of my tendereſt love, tho' the offſpring of my crime. Mr. Lafew had been in town above a fortnight before ſhe laſt came; and from her I had the pleaſure of learning that my letter had affected him as I wiſhed; that he had begged her pardon for his paſt injurious conduct, in the moſt frank and affectionate manner; and tho' he ſpoke of me with unaffected kindneſs and regard, yet was ſo far from aſking to what place I had retired, that he deſired her not to inform him, leſt in ſome weak moment he might endeavour to ſee me.

To complete my ſatisfaction ſhe aſſured me, that ſhe had never known him more affectionate in his behaviour to her than ſince his return out of the north; only it was mixed with a degree of veneration and reſpect, which gave her pain to receive from a huſband whom ſhe ſo tenderly loved, and whoſe paſt lapſes ſhe ſo cordially forgave. The excellent lady added, that my child was beloved by both, and treated, in every reſpect, as their other children.

What more can be wanting to my felicity! My temporal concerns are all ſupplied in the moſt perfect manner; and I have every means of providing for my future welfare. I may appear blameable for taking advantage of this charity, when I had the means of ſubſiſting what may be called better without it; but I hope I am not ſo bad a worker, but that I ſhall rather be a benefit than an expence to the ſociety; and if not, I truſt in their boundleſs humanity for pardoning my having recourſe to it for preſerving me from a failure in virtue, as readily as if my motive had been to obtain relief from neceſſities of a ſtill leſs pernicious nature, the want of ſubſiſtence.

Whatever cenſurers Fanny may meet with, ſhe was in no danger of being blamed by her companions; who had been greatly edified by her induſtry and piety, ſince ſhe came into the houſe, and were ſo pleaſed with the mildneſs and ſweetneſs of her behaviour, that they could not blame any motive which brought her thither; where, perhaps ſhe was the only one who was induced to apply to that aſylum merely from penitence, unaccompanied with any diſtreſs of circumſtances; tho' many who were led by other motives, have, when inſtructed in the true nature of their crimes, become as penitent.

CHAP. VIII.

Love is the pleaſant frenzy of the mind:
And frantick men, in their mad actions, ſhow
An happineſs which none but madmen know.

DRYDEN.

THE next perſon called upon to communicate the particulars of her *eventful* life, was a woman of above thirty years of age, in whoſe face appeared beauty in decay. Her features were extremely fine; but her eyes, which had been naturally languiſhing, were now become languid; and her complexion ſhewed the ill effects of time and irregularity; and of the pernicious arts made uſe of to reſtore a fictitious bloom, when the true one is paſſed. Her perſon was leſs impaired; ſhe ſtill preſerved a genteel air, accompanied with ſome degree of dignity, which her manner and behaviour did not contradict. It is generally allowed, that vanity requires more ſolicitations than diffidence: It is no wonder then if this ſociety, who had much to humble them, and nothing whereof they could be vain, did not reſiſt the general agreement and deſire. They might indeed plead a title to honour wherein few in more reſpected ranks of life can rival them, the merit of being ſenſible of their errors, and penitent for them: But ſuch real deſert can be no ſubject for vanity; on the contrary, it is both the conſequence and the cauſe of the trueſt humility.

The perſon I have been deſcribing, as the next who was to be her own biographer, was ready to obey

obey the desire of her companions, as soon as they intimated it, and proceeded in the following terms.

My father was a country gentleman, who had impaired his fortune in his youth; but prudence came to his relief before his ruin was compleated; and having married a woman with a tolerable fortune, and a great deal of œconomy, he settled entirely at his country seat.

My mother's extreme good house-wifery might have restored his estate to his former bulk, had she not frustrated all her care by being extremely prolific; insomuch that breeding and saving went hand in hand, in such due proportion, that all we could expect from our parents was mere subsistence.

There were so many of us that my mother had sufficient employment in the necessary care of our bodies; nor could my father afford more time for the cultivation of our minds than was requisite to teach us to read and write, and that to no great degree of perfection.

We had several neighbours with whom we lived on good and equal terms; tho' the charges of so large a family rendered us unequal to them in opulence. One of these was a gentleman, who had two sons; the eldest was on his travels when I was first admitted into company, which was in my sixteenth year; for my mother very prudently kept us in the nursery till that age, to lessen the expence of our cloaths; which, if we had appeared to visitors, must have been more genteel than otherwise was necessary.

This neighbour, whose name was Turnham, had his second son at home; a youth little more than two years older than myself. His person was agreeable, and his manner very insinuating.

His father had deſigned him for the ſtudy of the law; but ſoon perceived it was too laborious a profeſſion for ſo volatile a genius.

The young gentleman had been guilty of ſome juvenile exceſſes; and when he found his ſchool-maſter intended to puniſh him, he ran away from ſchool; and his father could not prevail on him to come home, but on a promiſe of never ſending him thither again. This indulgent parent then put him under the tuition of the curate of his pariſh; but found it impoſſible to fix him to any ſort of ſtudy, and that his head ran entirely on the army.

When Mr. Turnham found that it was impoſſible to make his ſon apply to any thing ſerious, he thought it moſt prudent to gratify his wiſh, and bought him a commiſſion.

Young Turnham had juſt acquired the title of captain, and a red coat, when I firſt knew him; two diſtinguiſhing circumſtances, which made me look upon him as a very fine gentleman; and I being then very young, and in the full bloom of youth, attracted his notice, of which I ſoon became ſenſible, by his aſſiduities where-ever I met him; and as he was idle both by profeſſion and inclination, he had nothing to do but to viſit his neighbours; and contrived to know our motions ſo well, that he generally met us wherever we went, pretendedly by chance; but he took care I ſhould be better informed of the cauſe, to which I owed a circumſtance highly agreeable to me.

Captain Turnham's vivacity and natural good breeding made him much careſſed. His converſation enlivened every company he came into; and the young women were all my rivals, each endeavouring to attract the man, who appeared

to

to them the moſt agreeable in the country: But I had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing they were all unſucceſsful; and found my vanity moſt pleaſingly flattered in being preferred to ſo many, who omitted no means of gaining the heart which voluntarily gave itſelf to me.

Captain Turnham took all opportunities of drawing me aſide from the company; nor was I backward in complying with his inclination in this requeſt, ſince the ſhort converſations thus obtained, yielded much greater ſatisfaction than mixed company could give. On theſe occaſions his vivacity was changed into tenderneſs, and he became more pleaſing to me, by the thing that would have rendered him leſs entertaining to others.

As I had more ſincerity than art, he was not long a ſtranger to the return my heart made to his affection. From this knowledge aroſe a correſpondence by letters, which was very diligently carried on by us both, wherein we communicated our tendereſt ſentiments; and I never failed giving him information of every opportunity of meeting me; nor did he ever neglect the ſummons.

But the moſt pleaſing of all our interviews, were a few ſtolen meetings in a neighbouring wood, whither he generally went every morning by five o'clock, and ſtaid till ſeven; and whenever I could poſſibly get clear of the reſt of my family any part of thoſe two hours, I went to him, and ſtaid as long as I durſt venture to be abſent from home.

I paid dearly for this pleaſure, by the conſtant perturbation of my mind, which was ever anxious for fear of diſappointment, and grievouſly mortified when I was prevented from meeting

him, which was very frequently the caſe; for we judged it neceſſary to be extremely ſecret in our mutual paſſion, tho' our actions and our views were wholly innocent; but we were both ſo entirely dependent on our parents, and ſo deſtitute of fortune, that we could hope for the liberty of ſeeing each other only from their ignorance of the ſtrength of our mutual attachment. In this wood we interchanged a thouſand vows of eternal love, with all that profuſeneſs wherewith they are laviſhed by boys and girls, who neither know the nature of their own hearts, nor of the paſſion they profeſs. Here we formed various ſchemes for our future union, all founded on the hopes of my lover's preferment, which our wiſhes repreſented to us as not far diſtant.

I had no confidante at home: I had two ſiſters and three brothers older than myſelf, and two brothers and one ſiſter younger; but my elder ſiſters were ſo much older, that they tyrannized over me as a child, and my younger ſiſter was an infant. Moſt of my brothers were placed where youth may be commendably and commodiouſly boarded, lodged, taught, &c. for the moderate ſum of ten pounds a year; and thoſe who had outgrown the age for theſe cheap ſeminaries, were apprenticed to ſuch buſineſſes as they were deſigned to follow, except my eldeſt brother; and it being thought proper that the heir of the family ſhould be able to write and read, and have a gentleman's education, he was ſent to a ſchool where learning was not ſold ſo great a penny-worth, and afterwards to the Univerſity, where he was during the time Captain Turnham made his addreſſes to me.

I believe the air of intrigue adds a pleaſure to courtſhip: Ours had this recommendation in a ſupreme

ſupreme deg ee ; and perhaps, had we received permiſſion from our parents, it might have diminiſhed our paſſion. We were of an age for romance, and were delighted with every circumſtance that bore the air of it. An allowed affection, like an eſtabliſhed religion, is apt to turn the warmth, which in one caſe is called paſſion, in the other zeal, into lukewarmneſs. In moſt caſes oppoſition is as neceſſary to preſerve mental fire in its full blaze, as air is for the more material kind; and I have ſeen that love, which, while approved by all, has burnt faintly, like ſmothered embers, blown into ſuch a flame by unexpected oppoſition, that it has almoſt conſumed every principle, and turned the whole mind into a general conflagration.

The attachment between Captain Turnham and myſelf was not wholly unobſerved; but it was looked upon only as a coquetry on both ſides; for as there was no apparent advantage on either, our parents were not very ready to take alarm; and we found ſo much pleaſure in ſecrecy, that we took great care to preſerve it; whilſt we continually complained of the conſtraint we were under as the heavieſt misfortune, and of the diſtant proſpect of our marriage, which we really felt very ſeverely, in the language of deſpairing lovers, who did not find that every vow, which paſſion or ſuſpicion ever invented, never to marry any other perſon, or not to prove falſe to their profeſſions, was a ſufficient gratification.

CHAP. IX.

Intereſt is the moſt prevailing cheat ;
The ſly ſeducer both of age and youth ;
They ſtudy that, and think they ſtudy truth :
Where intereſt fortifies an argument,
Weak reaſon ſerves to gain the will's aſſent ;
For ſouls already warpt receive an eaſy bent.

DRYDEN.

IF the neceſſity of concealment helped to raiſe our paſſion to ſo great an height, what addition did it not receive from the open oppoſition which broke out in the ſecond year of its exiſtence!

The cauſe of this event was a gentleman, who came to make a viſit to one of our neighbours. His name was Merton: He confeſſed but fifty years of age, tho' he appeared in every reſpect above threeſcore. Whether he thought proper to ſink a conſiderable number of his years, or whether the debauched life he had led gave him the infirmities and appearance of a more advanced age, I cannot pretend to ſay; but, by chuſing rather to have the latter believed he rendered thoſe defects nauſeous which otherwiſe one ſhould only have pitied.

Mr. Merton, in ſhort, was a battered rake, whoſe body was worn out, but his mind unreformed. While his perſon exhibited all the imperfections of old age, he affected the diſſolute manner and looſe converſation of a thoughtleſs boyiſh rake; whereby inſtead of inſpiring that reſpect which we feel at ſeeing a man full of age and honour,

nour, who, like the ruins of a noble edifice, is rendered more reſpectable by time, and receives new charms from his decay, Mr. Merton was the moſt contemptible, as well as moſt nauſeous, of mankind.

This gentleman my ill fortune gave me for a lover; and ſo combuſtible was his heart, at an age leaſt proper, that it took fire the firſt time he ſaw me, and burnt with ſuch violence, that he could not reſt out of my preſence. The gentleman whoſe viſitor he was, happened to be a great friend of my father; and thinking it would be happy for him to diſpoſe of a daughter to a man of ſo large a fortune as Mr. Merton was poſſeſſed of, he encouraged him in his paſſion.

Mr. Merton was ſufficiently ſenſible of his own infirmities, to think a nurſe a neceſſary appendix; and tho' he had been well acquainted with our ſex, was weak enough to fancy a girl of ſeventeen a proper perſon for a wife. This conſideration, joined with the paſſion he had conceived for me, ſoon determined him to make his addreſſes.

This was the only circumſtance which could have rendered him more odious to me than he was before. My mind was the very eſſence of romance; could fancy a ſtate of perfect bliſs in more barren plains than thoſe of Arcadia with my Strephon; could even imagine ſcenes of happineſs in wilds and deſarts; and with ſincerity have addreſſed him as Belvidera does Jaffier, and have promiſed not to forſake him,

Tho' the bare earth ſhould be our reſting place;
Its roots our food; ſome cliff our habitation;

that I would

Have made my arm a pillow for his head,
And watch'd him till the morning.

Such was then the extravagance of my notions; the

the moſt unfit ſtate for the contrary madneſs, which as ignorant of the power of riches as I was of that of love, fancies that wealth, however encumbered, muſt give happineſs.

It would, in the diſpoſition I have been repreſenting, have been very difficult to have perſuaded me that Mr. Merton could confer any benefit on me by becoming my huſband; and he found I liſtened to him with ſo little complacency, that he thought he ſhould find a ſhorter way of arriving at the completion of his wiſhes by applying to my father, and accordingly changed his addreſſes from me to him.

Mr. Merton, in this change of his meaſures, certainly judged well. My father received his propoſal with pleaſure, and my mother with joy: For an offer to take a daughter off their hands, without requiring any fortune with her, was an irreſiſtable argument for their conſent; and however diſtaſteful he might be to me, ſuch a lover was ſure to have many charms for them.

Mr. Merton in nothing ſhewed ſo true a knowledge of himſelf, as in being ſenſible that the part of a lover was not the beſt ſuited to him; and would have been much in the right to have put as ſpeedy an end to it as poſſible, had he found any other means than that ſtill more improper one of converting the lover into the huſband. He preſſed for a ſpeedy marriage, and my parents were not deſirous to delay it; therefore an early day was fixed for the ceremony.

All I could urge againſt this determination was of no effect. My tears and my intreaties excited only anger in thoſe whoſe compaſſion I attempted to raiſe. I ſuffered all, that hatred for the man I was going to marry, and love for him from whom I was to be thus cruelly torn, could inflict; and

and my expreſſions were adequate to my diſtreſs, but they were all unavailing. I confeſſed my love for Captain Turnham, and his for me, hoping that might plead for me: but, on the contrary, it convinced them the more of the neceſſity of marrying me, to prevent me from becoming the wife of one as poor as myſelf. It had likewiſe another diſagreeable conſequence; it made them watch me ſo narrowly, that I could not get one moment's interview with Captain Turnham; if he came to the houſe, I was locked up in my chamber till his departure. I got the means of writing him word of my ſituation, intreating him, if he loved mē, to deliver me from it; offering to fly with him wherever he pleaſed: But I had no opportunity of knowing whether he was too wiſe to accept my propoſal, which I am apt to believe was the caſe; for all poſſibility of further intercourſe was ſtopped between us; ſo very circumſpect were my parents; and the day of my marriage found me ſtill expoſed and defenceleſs, to be the victim of their prudence.

I was led, much more dead than alive, up to the altar, where my tottering knees could not ſupport me; but my mother on one ſide, and my eldeſt ſiſter on the other, did that office: But before the end of the ceremony, even their aſſiſtance was not ſufficient; for I fainted away, which only delayed it; and as ſoon as I appeared come to myſelf, it was concluded; tho' I was no more capable of joining in it, either by thought or ſpeech, than when I was in that ſtate of temporary death.

An unprejudiced ſpectator would have drawn melancholy prognoſtics for Mr. Merton's future happineſs from my conduct; but he ſeemed unalarmed, appeared all joy, without one ſigh of pity either for me or himſelf; admired my virgin modeſty; wiſhed to diſſipate my diffidence; but did

did not once ſuſpect that averſion alone produced all the effects which he attributed to ſuch various cauſes.

After ſtaying a few days at my father's, Mr. Merton carried me to his country ſeat, where all was magnificent, and indeed beautiful? but *he* was there; and that was ſufficient to change the nature of every thing about me. While he was preſent, nothing could pleaſe. The houſe was elegant, but *he* inhabited it: The park was fine, but *he* always accompanied me there: The proſpect would have been charming, if he had not made part of it: But while he was always at my elbow, my ſituation appeared to me no better than a gaudy priſon.

Mr. Merton had expected to ſee me delighted with all the magnificence around me; my inſenſibility therefore could not fail of being very diſagreeable to him. I took no pains to conceal it: My romantic imagination found a melancholy pleaſure in ſhewing my diſcontent. I formed my conduct on ſome of the romances I had read; and fancied I acted a noble part, while I was indulging a paſſion now become criminal, and endeavouring to render a ſituation, which muſt be allowed an unhappy one, ſtill more wretched than was neceſſary. Like moſt lovers, while their paſſion remains unabated, I valued *conſtancy* highly; and therefore placed much merit in ſacrificing all the little ſatisfaction I might have enjoyed, to what I called the delicacy of my affection for Captain Turnham. The Princeſs of Cleves was ſo much my favourite heroine, that had Mr. Merton treated my melancholy with indulgence and good nature, I have no doubt but I ſhould have made him the confidante of my paſſion; but as my ill-judged conduct rendered him moroſe, I thought her

her highneſs's example therein, not quite expedient.

All the people of faſhion in the neighbourhood came to viſit us, as ſoon as they thought it proper to intrude on the leiſure of a new-married couple. The reluctance with which I had accepted this ſplendid ſlavery was by ſome means known in the country; and my appearance ſhewed how little I was reconciled to it. An old man, who marries a girl whoſe youth and perſon prejudice beholders in her favour, has but little chance of being treated with much candour. The cauſe of pity on one ſide is obvious; on the other, indeed, it is very probable: But then ſo it might have been to the huſband himſelf, before he became ſuch; and if he ſhut his eyes on the danger into which he was running, while it was not too late to avoid it, people do not very readily give him leave to open them afterwards.

A young woman, who marries an old man, brings her virtue into ſome danger, and her reputation into more. Young men look upon the wife of an old one as part of their property: They may be diſappointed of their conqueſt, but they generally make the trial. This expoſes a woman to frequent temptation. Age is ſeldom unaccompanied with peeviſhneſs; and the retroſpection of a man's own folly, which every contrariety in taſte or temper repreſents in glaring colours to him, is not likely to let it lie dormant. Thus he, who can have no merit to a young girl but indulgence, becomes harſh and ill-tempered, while every younger man is polite, attentive, aſſiduous, and tender. The contraſt is dangerous; but virtue founded on religion (for no other foundation is firm enough to bear ſo ſtrong a virtue as that muſt be which has every paſſion to conquer) may lead a woman

woman thro' this ordeal unhurt; yet even that cannot always ſecure her character: Probability, built on human frailty, is againſt her; as in moſt caſes there is an apparent want of principle in a woman's promiſing love to a man to whom ſhe knows ſhe cannot give it, and entering into a ſtate, whoſe bonds ſhould be mutual affection, with one who has nothing to render him agreeable to her but money: Every opinion is prejudiced againſt her, and people are apt to imagine that ſhe who violates truth, for the indulgence of vanity or avarice, may break the moſt ſolemn vows for the gratification of another paſſion. And thus mankind will always think, becauſe it flatters their hopes: tho' experience continually ſhows them how very far the argument is from being concluſive, by the very good behaviour of many women, who have reduced themſelves into this ſituation, and who ſuffer with virtue, tho' with ſorrow, during the moſt valuable part of their lives, for this fatal vanity.

Another circumſtance which is apt to hurt a woman's reputation in this ſituation, is the deſire moſt people have, that the folly of an old man in this reſpect ſhould not be unpuniſhed; and becauſe they wiſh it, they are ſure to believe it on the ſmalleſt evidence.

Pity was viſible in every eye that beheld me; which convinced me the more of my own miſery. How great muſt it be, if thoſe who knew only half my ſufferings, and who were void of all regard for me, could yet not ſee me without compaſſion! Thus I argued, and thus endeavoured to increaſe my diſcontent.

One of our viſitors told us ſhe was going to Tunbridge; upon which Mr. Merton, to my great ſurprize,

prize, informed her, that we ſhould meet her there. He had never hinted this intention to me; I ſuppoſe becauſe he imagined it might give me pleaſure: Nor did I much blame him, as it could not do ſo but for reaſons very far from flattering to him; and my behaviour did not give me a title to expect a very diſintereſted regard for my ſatisfaction, as his vanity, together with ignorance of ſome of my ſentiments, muſt prevent his knowing that I deſerved his pity, at leaſt as much as his anger.

Tunbridge had no charms for me, but the chance it ſeemed to offer me of having leſs of Mr. Merton's company, and much fewer *tete à têtes*, which were very dreadful, his fondneſs or his anger being equally odious; and of a reaſonable medium between them I ſaw no hope Inſtead of looking on Tunbridge as a place of gaiety and diverſion, I propoſed no ſatisfaction from it, but more frequent opportunities of indulging my melancholy, and retiring from every eye.

CHAP. X.

And doubts and fears to jealouſies will turn;
The hotteſt hell in which a heart can burn.

CONG.

BEFORE the ſecond month of my wedlock was quite expired, we went to Tunbridge; a place where Mr. Merton reſorted yearly, to patch up his tattered conſtitution. The ſeaſon was then very full; but as I had few acquaintance, and wanted ſpirits to make new ones, it appeared very dull to me; yet it anſwered my hopes; for Mr. Merton

Merton was always engaged abroad; and at firſt I enjoyed a retirement which the country did not afford me. But the lady I mentioned, by whoſe means I firſt learnt Mr. Merton's intention of going thither, was inclined, by the ſociableneſs of her own nature, both to pity the ſolitude I lived in and to end the misfortune, by making me come abroad. She would call upon me both morning and evening, and not depart till ſhe prevailed on me to accompany her. I was as void of ſpirits to reſiſt her importunities, as to enjoy the diverſions to which ſhe carried me.

As Mr. Merton had ornamented his victim with many family jewels and fine cloaths (an expence he had taken on himſelf) I made too reſplendent a figure to paſs unnoticed. I ſoon found I had no occaſion to put myſelf to any trouble for acquaintance; it would have been a greater labour to avoid them. The old ladies were moved by my youth and melancholy to pity me, which gave a pleaſing ſoftneſs to their civility: The young ones forgave me my ſuperior finery, and any advantages of perſon, when they looked on the doleful conſequences of the latter; and when they placed all that vanity could render deſirable in me in one account, and the mighty ſum of all Mr. Merton's diſagreeableneſs in the other, they could not ſuppoſe the balance of happineſs was ſufficient to excite one grain of envy.

Thus I became a favourite with my own ſex; and I have already given reaſons why the other was not likely to be leſs diſpoſed in my favour. I ſoon became the determined idol of the men: Some perhaps addreſſed me from real liking; others, from the hopes my ſituation inſpired; and ſtill more, for the pleaſure of making an old man jealous, or to obtain the honour of being thought

thought to have ſown diſſention between a new-married couple.

I was ſo indifferent to the opinion of all the people in the place, that I do not believe I ſhould ſoon have found out this general admiration of the men, if Mr. Merton had not opened my eyes. As ſoon as they began to ſhew the leaſt attention to me, he grew jealous; and as he was a plain ſpeaker, I was not long ignorant of it. I wondered at his whim; and ſet it down to his account as another of his faults: It made no great addition to the number; for I had collected a large catalogue in my mind, and could make none to my diſlike, for it was paſt increaſe.

I did not conſider how natural jealouſy is to a man who knows he is not beloved. My countenance and air ſufficiently ſhewed me capable of love; and he was ſure not to be the object. In ſuch a ſituation, jealouſy was pardonable; but I was too young to reaſon deeply; and had no preposſeſſion in his favour to help me to excuſe him. Becauſe I was intirely indifferent to all the men in the place, I thought he injured me grievouſly; and reſented it accordingly. If I let the men talk to me, it was becauſe I was too indolent to go from them; and was ſo abſorbed in my own thoughts, that I ſcarcely heard one ſentence in ten of all they addreſſed to me.

The indifference I ſhewed to all, gained me much praiſe from the old ladies; and the young ones complimented my behaviour, and careſſed me extremely, in order to get into the circle of the gentlemen who commonly attended me; and to whom they hoped to recommend themſelves by that vivacity which I ſo much wanted; not doubting to get away every admirer from a woman, whoſe

whoſe coldneſs of manner, and languid mind, ſcarcely afforded them an anſwer.

The approbation my conduct received from every other perſon, made me more highly reſent Mr. Merton's ſuſpicions; which ſoon grew as brutal as they were unjuſt. I ſaw no means of avoiding them, but by ſhutting myſelf up intirely, which was impoſſible, unleſs I had told the reaſon; and I had ſenſe enough to ſee that I could not take a more imprudent ſtep. Nor do I imagine any care could have quieted a paſſion grown to ſuch a rage as Mr. Merton's jealouſy, and which undoubtedly was without the leaſt colour of reaſon from any miſconduct of mine: But the ſequel ſeemed to juſtify him; his imagination did but anticipate the cauſe; and with him ſuſpicion was prophetic.

Tho' the addreſſes of many lovers, and the extravagant rage of my huſband, could not bring me out of my lethargy of grief (for my ſpirits were ſo intirely ſunk, that it could be called by no other name) yet a circumſtnnce happened which effected it at once.

I went out one evening, more languid than ever, wearied with flattery in the morning while I was abroad, and with abuſe at noon, when dinner brought a *téte à téte* between my huſband and myſelf at home. I was ſcarcely able to ſit up; ſo much did the extreme depreſſion of my ſpirits affect my whole frame; and was more inclined to vent ſome of my melancholy in tears, than to go into company: But a lady came to ſee me, who would take no denial; I muſt either go to the rooms with her as uſual; or, if I was not well enough (for that was the turn I had given to my refuſal) ſhe would ſpend the evening with me.

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In my ſtate of dejection, nothing was ſo diſtreſſing as to be obliged to ſupport a converſation with ſo little aſſiſtance; therefore, as the leſs grievous of ſo diſagreeable an alternative, I conſented to go to the public room with her She had a great deal of good-nature, and therefore, was ſincerely glad ſhe had prevailed; convinced that diſſipation would be of ſervice to one, whoſe diſorder ſhe plainly ſaw was on her ſpirits: But her ſatisfaction was ſoon checked, and turned into a fear of having done me harm; for we had not got above half up the room, when I fainted away.

This accident drew numbers round me; all the ſmelling bottles in the room were collected about me; when I came to myſelf, water and drops were preſented me, and every thing offered that promiſed relief. The lady, who brought me out, immediately aſked aſſiſtance to carry me home again; but I, who came abroad ſo unwillingly, now inſiſted on ſtaying where I was.

A change which ſo much ſurprized my companion, was occaſioned by the ſight of Captain Turnham; which affected my depreſſed ſpirits to ſo violent a degree, as occaſioned the diſorder that had raiſed ſo great an alarm. When I came a little to myſelf, all the volatiles preſented me did leſs towards reviving me than the appearance of Captain Turnham; who in the croud was attending; tho' with a countenance which expreſſed real concern, while thoſe of others only ſpoke the language of civility.

The Captain was ſo prudent as to addreſs me only like a common acquaintance, while we had ſo many ſpectators. I took the hint, and anſwered him in the ſame manner; but endeavoured as ſoon as poſſible to diſſipate the croud, and could with a good grace aſſure them I was quite well;

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for my joy had proved to me ſuch a cordial, that all agreed they had never ſeen me look ſo well.

Captain Turnham watched the opportunity, and we got half an hour's uninterrupted converſation; wherein, after lamenting our hard fate, he informed me, that had it not been for his father's ſickneſs, and then his death, of which I had heard, he ſhould have ſet out for Tunbridge the moment he knew we were gone thither; and that he could not perſuade himſelf to remain in the country an hour after he had performed the moſt neceſſary duties. He was in doubt whether it might be proper to come to my houſe; therefore dreſſed himſelf as ſoon as he arrived, and repaired to the public room, where he hoped to find me; and after having walked round it, and convinced himſelf that I was not there, he placed himſelf near the door, that he might not fail of ſeeing me as I entered.

I thought myſelf lucky in having that half hour allowed me: and I found I was not to expect its continuance; for I perceived ſome of my acquaintance coming up to me, at which I could not forbear expreſſing my vexation. Captain Turnham juſt hinted the neceſſity of appearing country acquaintance, which might excuſe our intimacy. Accordingly I aſked many queſtions about my family, and my former neighbours, who had indeed borne no ſhare in our converſation till then; and this was repeated in every new ſet of company, both that evening and the next day.

As Captain Turnham had made ſome acquaintance with Mr. Merton, when he firſt came into our neighbourhood, and learnt from me that my relations had been prudent enough to conceal the ſhare my love had in my reluctance to the marriage,

riage, he went up to the card-table where he was playing, carried him the compliments of my family, and of his friend, and of many others who had never ſent them; for he had not declared his intention of going to Tunbridge.

Tho' Mr. Merton was not then mightily delighted with the conſequences of his viſit in that county, yet, as he had received great civilities there, he enquired after them with pleaſure, and gave the captain a general invitation to his houſe, and a particular one for the next day, which was ſure to be accepted.

An intimacy between me and one with whom I was ſuppoſed to have been acquainted from my childhood, appeared ſo natural, that people were not quick at taking offence at it; and Mr. Merton, who boiled over with rage if I did but ſpeak to, or look at, any other man, appeared free from all ſuſpicion of Captain Turnham; tho' the change in me was ſo very apparent, as might have been obſervable to one leſs jealous. My eyes became animated; my complexion glowed; I ſpoke with eaſe; and my whole air was changed: But this was all attributed to the waters, which I drank from the time I firſt came there; and I was quoted as the greateſt cure they had performed that ſeaſon, by all but Mr. Merton, who imagined the alteration proceeded only from the pleaſure I took in being admired; and if I looked particularly blooming, or more animated than common, it would throw him into ſuch outrageous paſſions, as Captain Turnham's preſence could not ſuſtain, who thereby often became the witneſs of his brutality; which gave me leſs uneaſineſs, when I knew I was tenderly pitied by the object of all my affections: Nor indeed could I well

well have been angry; for tho' Mr. Merton had nothing particular to lay to my charge, but only ſuppoſed, that as I did not love him, I muſt like ſome of thoſe whoſe aſſiduities he obſerved, tho' my behaviour gave not the leaſt reaſon for his ſuſpicion, yet I was conſcious that he had in reality ſufficient cauſe, though he knew it not.

Captain Turnham was extremely cautious in his conduct to me; and by that means taught me a care, which, infatuated as I was, I ſhould probably not otherwiſe have taken: But as this laid him under a great reſtraint, he thought he deſerved to be rewarded by ſome private interviews, wherein he might have liberty to ſpeak his paſſion, without being obliged to guard every look, to prevent ſpectators from knowing the ſubject of our converſation.

To this my fears of a diſcovery made ſome objection; nor was I without apprehenſions from the imprudence of his paſſion, which I feared my own was too violent to be able to repreſs. I ſaw that a lover, who knew he was too much beloved to give any real offence, muſt be a very dangerous perſon. Tho' Mr. Merton had no ſhare of my affections, I was determined to keep what I called my conjugal fidelity. "*He comes too near, "who comes to be denied,*" has been truly ſaid. My behaviour gave Captain Turnham ſufficient encouragement to be very importunate in his ſolicitations for a private meeting, and the weakneſs he preſumed upon was his friend; for at laſt he prevailed; and as it was not very difficult to contrive it at ſuch a place as Tunbridge, he took care that I ſhould not have leiſure to retract, and the meeting immediatly followed my conſent.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Anger in haſty words and blows,
Itſelf diſcharges on its foes:
Our ſorrow too finds ſome relief,
In tears, that wait upon our grief.
Thus every paſſion, but fond love,
Unto its own redreſs does move:
But that alone the wretch inclines
To what prevents her own deſigns;
To acts that render her deſpis'd,
Where ſhe endeavours to be priz'd. WALLER.

A Woman ſeldom ſtops at the firſt imprudence. I had been with difficulty prevailed upon to conſent to the firſt private interview with Captain Turnham; but after that was once granted, I made no ſcruple of another meeting; and then of another ſtill; and ſo on, till they came almoſt daily. The reſpect with which he at firſt behaved, encouraged me to truſt him again. The danger vaniſhed from my thoughts; and I did not ſee why I ſhould deny myſelf and my lover ſo great a pleaſure as we received from the liberty of profeſſing our mutual love, and lamenting the cruelty of fortune and parents, which had divided us, when this indulgence might be granted without an infringement of virtue; for I did not perceive that my huſband had a right to require me to be prudent as well as to be chaſte; and that encouraging the paſſion of another man, or indulging my own for him, was an offence againſt virtue, within whatever bounds I reſtrained my actions.

A woman who hopes to preſerve her virtue after ſhe has laid aſide decorum, is as fooliſh as a man would be, who ſhould expect to defend a town, whoſe fortification and outworks are deſtroyed, againſt a powerful enemy; eſpecially if there is treachery within, which I am afraid is the caſe when a woman's affections are ſtrongly engaged.

I could not ſo eaſily deceive Captain Turnham as I did myſelf: He knew the conſequence of all my actions, and how long reſpect was neceſſary to deprive me of all fear; the only enemy he had: And virtue followed my prudence, as is generally the caſe with her who parts with the latter.

Theſe private meetings enabled us the better to conſtrain ourſelves in public; and we had the ſatisfaction of continuing our courſe unſuſpected, till one night that my houſekeeper paſſed by juſt as I came out of Captain Turnham's lodging with him, and viſibly obſerved me. I that inſtant anticipated the puniſhment of my crime; the immediate conſequence occuring at once to me. My fright was exceſſive; I could not ſupport myſelf; and was forced to return with the Captain into his lodging, till I was enough recovered to walk.

This houſekeeper was one, who, as I learned from the lady I have mentioned as my neighbour, had, during the continuance of her youth, lived with Mr. Merton in another capacity; nor had her office quite ceaſed till he married me: But as her bloom was paſt, corpulency had impaired her beauty, and poſſeſſion had long rendered Mr. Merton tired of her. He informed her, that ſhe could no longer ſerve him in the ſame character; but, as a reward, he conſtituted her houſekeeper.

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As this woman looked on me as the cauſe of her being degraded into a ſervant, and an interloper on her rights, it is no wonder ſhe hated me; and ſhe ſoon made me ſenſible of it by her inſolence; which was ſo great, that I had ſeveral times expreſſed to Mr. Merton my inclination to part with her; thinking it a neceſſary piece of complaiſance to him, as ſhe had been his ſervant before ſhe was mine.

At firſt, he mildly deſired me to try her longer; telling me, good ſervants would take upon them: But I could not perceive her ſuch; for I ſaw ſhe was extravagant, waſteful, and idle; and at each freſh inſtance of her inſolence, urged her other faults, as reaſons why I ſhould not be expoſed to her inſults: But as Mr Merton's temper grew worſe, he began to receive ſuch complaints with much ill humour, and to tell me plainly, that ſhe ſhould not be turned away; that the houſekeeper was as much his ſervant as mine; and he would not looſe a good one by my perverſeneſs.

As this woman knew by whoſe intereſt ſhe kept her place, and ſaw therein a ſufficient proof of the little power I had, ſhe loſt all reſpect, and behaved to me with continual inſolence, and ſcarcely ſuffered any other ſervant in the houſe to obey me. This would have been a very mortifying circumſtance to one, whoſe thoughts had not been ſo entirely engroſſed by other vexations, as to receive little additional uneaſineſs from leſſer griefs. It had indeed increaſed my contempt for, and averſion to, Mr. Merton; but it never appeared to me in the light of an affliction till now, that I ſaw all poſſible uſe would be made by ſuch a woman of the diſcovery ſhe had in her power; and if any addition or exaggeration was neceſſary I did doubt but ſhe would ſupply the defect.

In this ſituation I knew not how to return home; nor could the Captain offer me any conſolation; for he was almoſt as wretched as myſelf. The only expedient he could offer to ſave me from the brutal rage of my huſband, was, that I ſhould fly with him: But I could not reſolve to give up my character, fortune and friends, and live the object of contempt and ſcorn. I had but little reaſon to expect any favour from a man whom I had ſo cruelly injured, when I had experienced the greateſt brutality imaginable from him without the leaſt cauſe. But I thought it ſcarcely poſſible for him to treat me worſe than he already had done, without my giving any occaſion for it. He had not proof ſufficient for a divorce; therefore I hoped to avoid public ſhame: For had it been told that I was ſeen coming out of the Captain's lodging, my reputation was on ſo good a footing that it would only have been treated as an ambiguous circumſtance.

With theſe conſiderations I encouraged myſelf as much as poſſible. I had gone into the public room as ſoon as I left the Captain, and could not prevail on myſelf to go home till moſt of the company was departed. At my return to my lodging, I ſoon found Mr. Merton had been long enough at home, and the time had been made ſo good uſe of by the houſekeeper, that he was acquainted with the place where ſhe had ſeen me; for I was received with ſuch an air of rage and fury, that I was really afraid for my life.

I had not been able to invent a very good excuſe for my being in thoſe lodgings; and what I had framed, might with ſome examination perhaps have been proved to be falſe; as I deſigned to pretend that I had made viſits to ladies, who poſſibly were in the public room: But ſome ſuch

thing

thing was neceſſary to account for my time, and for my paſſing by the Captain's." As I was ſo poorly provided with an apology, it was no part of my misfortune that Mr Merton would not give me an opportunity to defend myſelf.

His abuſe deſcended to every infamous appellative; and I was forbid to appear in his preſence, put into the cuſtody of my accuſer, and ordered to be locked up in a garret.

This command was punctually obeyed, and I was rudely dragged to the dirtieſt garret in the houſe, which ſtunk with filth and damp. In that conſiſted my ſole conſolation; for my jailor did not chuſe to ſtay in ſo noiſome a place; therefore I was delivered from her inſults: But ſhe was reſolved I ſhould receive as little relief as poſſible from her abſence; for ſhe took the candle with her, leaving me in the midſt of all this dirt without light to enable me to avoid it.

I had not ſtrength to go feeling about for a ſeat, but ſunk upon the ground; and there I remained, a prey to deſpair, remorſe, and reſentment, till the morning's dawn tempted me to riſe from the filth with which I was encompaſſed, and turned ſome of my thoughts to the loathſomeneſs of the place where I was confined. I ſoon perceived it muſt have been long uninhabited, and intirely converted into a lumber-room, which no living creature occupied, but ſpiders, beetles, and much other and more offenſive vermin: As there was neither chair nor bed in it, I could hope for no reſt, but on ſcraps of old boxes and ſuch lumber.

The day made no other alteration in my ſufferings, than in ſubjecting me to the cruelleſt inſults from the infamous wretch by whoſe brutality I was committed. I begged earneſtly to ſee Mr. Merton, and to have leave to defend myſelf. I aſſerted,

that tho' the circumſtances againſt me gave room for ſuſpicion, yet they were not ſufficient cauſe for ſuch treatment. But all I could urge was in vain: I addreſſed unwilling ears; and on ſuch there is little chance to make much impreſſion.

Grief and watching rendered me extremely dry; but it was with difficulty I obtained a little tea: For the cruel wretch, from whom I aſked it, ſaid, ſhe did not know whether ſhe ſhould not be falſe to her truſt if ſhe gave me any, being only ordered to provide me with neceſſary ſuſtenance; but ſhe thought tea was an indulgence, and therefore out of her inſtructions: However, finding I could eat nothing, ſhe let me have ſome twice in the day, provided I would eat ſome bread with it; for ſhe thought it ſo eaſy to be ſtarved, even by a ſhort abſtinence, that I believe ſhe was afraid of loſing a power wherein ſhe took ſo much ſatisfaction, and that death ſhould rob her of her victim.

I aſked, if I was never to go to bed any more, ſince no ſuch piece of furniture ſeemed to be thought neceſſary. She told me, I might do very well without for ſome time longer: Some mortification was proper after too much indulgence. I then begged for a chair, and that one of the ſervants might be ſuffered to ſweep and duſt the room. She anſwered, "that if I had been as nice in my "behaviour as about my habitation, I ſhould ne-"ver have been there." Tho' the reproach was inſolent from her, yet it was juſt; my conſcience aſſented, and I was ſilent.

In this way the day paſſed; and it is ſcarcely poſſible to imagine a greater agony of deſpair than I was in. Towards the evening I heard a footſtep at my door, and a ruſtling; The oddneſs of the noiſe made me look round, and I ſaw a paper was puſhed under

under the door. I made all the haſte to ſnatch it that I was able; and as ſoon as opened, I perceived it was Captain Turnham's hand. Joy would hardly ſuffer me to read it directly; and when I began, the fear of being caught in the peruſal, and that my confuſion in hiding it ſhould cauſe ſuſpicion, and occaſion a ſecond ſearch (for my pockets had undergone one before, leſs to the ſatisfaction of my perſecutor than to my own) agitated me ſo much, that I was with difficulty able to go thro' it, eſpecially as it was pretty long.

Captain Turnham told me in it, that he had not been able to reſt all the paſt night, from his apprehenſions for me; which were greatly increaſed, by neither Mr. Merton nor myſelf having made our appearance in the morning. He was afraid of coming to our lodging to make any inquiry; and could not bear to return to his own, as he had there little chance of getting any information. About noon a rumour began to be ſpread, that Mr. Merton had diſcovered a criminal correſpondence between him and me, and had confined me to my room, till he determined what further was to be done. He had obſerved a whiſper run round the room, and every eye turned towards him; and a friend gave him that account of the occaſion of it. This, he continued, increaſed his apprehenſions: He underſtood by this that the houſekeeper had not been ſilent, and feared the firſt effects of Mr. Merton's rage: but the circumſtance was ſo ſhort of proof of any thing criminal, that he did not imagine it poſſible for him to be guilty of any laſting outrage in conſequence of it; but, to be the better aſſured of all particulars, he went home, and ſent his footman to our lodging, to inquire of our ſervants the occaſion of ſome ſtrange

reports which were ſpread about me. He waited in his apartment for his man's return, who brought him a full detail of all that had paſſed; which by no means loſt in the repetition; the ſervants being diſpoſed in my favour, having always found me better tempered than their maſter or his houſekeeper.

The captain added, that the account of the brutality with which I had been treated, almoſt diſtracted him; and in the moſt tender and importunate manner beſeeched me to ſuffer him to deliver me from this horrid tyranny; which he propoſed to do, by fixing a high ladder to my window, the night but one after I received this letter. He ſaid he had viewed it, and found it practicable; that he would come up it, and guide my trembling ſteps, and have a poſt-chaiſe ready to carry us directly to London. He propoſed delaying it till the time mentioned, that he might get a chaiſe from thence, to prevent our being diſcovered immediately; for if we hired one at Tunbridge, we ſhould be too eaſily traced.

That moſt eloquent metal, gold, had prevailed on one of Mr. Merton's ſervants to deliver this letter; but as there were no means of anſwering it, he informed me he ſhould proceed in the plan he had mentioned to me without delay; and truſted, that if I had any value for my life or his, I ſhould not be backward in complying with his propoſal; for my reputation was as much loſt as if I had taken the moſt public ſteps to deſtroy it. Every tender ſentiment, which he thought could afford me the leaſt conſolation, was added to the letter; and I confeſs it proved a great cordial to me.

The

The aſſurances of his love, the hopes of a deliverance from what I ſuffered, and the ſtrength of my own paſſion, left me no ſcruples about complying with his propoſal: And tho' the time appeared too diſtant, yet expectation gave me ſuch a recruit of ſpirits, as enabled me to bear it.

CHAP. XII.

There is a luſt in man, no charm can tame,
Of loudly publiſhing his neighbour's ſhame:
On eagles wings immortal ſcandals fly,
While virtuous actions are but born and die.

Harv. Juv.

MY greateſt fear now was, that my jailor ſhould relent, and place me in a more comfortable room; as it ſeemed ſcarcely poſſible that ſhe ſhould leave me three nights without the power of going to bed, or even of putting myſelf into an eaſy poſture: But my apprehenſions were vain; her malice preſerved its full force, and her inſults continued: Nor did I then endeavour to pacify her; but received her, when ſhe entered, either with ſullenneſs or reſentment, leſt her anger ſhould flag.

I could indeed have wiſhed ſhe would have granted me a candle, that I might enlighted the tedious length of the night, with the peruſal of cap-

tain Turnham's letter; as I ſhould then have enjoyed it with more liberty, freed from the apprehenſions of her coming into the room: But herein I could not prevail; ſo had nothing but my imagination and expectation to conſole me.

This enabled me to ſupport life till the appointed night came. I longed to ſhed poppies over all the family, to ſend them early to their reſt; and was impatient at their ſitting up ſo long. But when I had my wiſh, and the houſe ſeemed as quiet as the grave, inſtead of the joy I expected to feel on the occaſion, I was full of tremors: I trembled if my own gown ruſtled; the ſtriking of a clock alarmed me; and if a dog barked, I fell into agonies.

My imagination ſuggeſted a thouſand noiſes; and every one was more dreadful to me than the execution bell of a poor criminal. When it grew dark, I had placed myſelf juſt by the window: I now opened and ſhut it continually, not knowing well why I did either; but after two hours expectation, which in the anxious agitation of my mind appeared an age, in one of the periods that the window remained open, I heard a little noiſe, and immediately the voice of my love whiſpered my name.

The beating of my heart rendered me almoſt unable to anſwer him; but if I had been more loquacious, he would not have waited for my indulging it. He was ſo impatient to get me out of my priſon, that he intreated me to make no delay; telling me at the ſame time, that the higheſt ladder he could get was not quite long enough; but he had found ſome broken places in the wall, which giving a reſt to his feet, had ſupplied that deficiency, and he hoped he ſhould convey me down as ſucceſsfully as he had mounted.

This

This particular was very dreadful to me, who had looked with horror on the great height I had to deſcend from the time I firſt received Captain Turnham's letter. But he allowed me little time for reflection; catching me up in his arms, and lifting me out of the window, ready to expire with fright. The ſecond ſtep he made, he revived me by ſaying, "Now we are ſafe enough." He had then reached the ladder, which afforded him firmer footing; and it was not long before we were down it.

He hurried me to the chaiſe, while his men carried the ladder away; and I had now recovered the power of ſpeech; and, according to a deſign I had framed, begged he would let his ſervant guide me to what place he thought proper, and that he would remain at Tunbridge a few days longer, to remove in ſome degree the ſuſpicion from himſelf; and to contrive to have it given out, that I had made my eſcape in the night, only in order to fly from the brutal uſage I had received, and without any male companion in my flight.

Captain Turnham was not well inclined to comply with my requeſt; but as it was much the moſt prudent proceeding, I prevailed upon him to grant it, and was put under the care of his ſervant.

We travelled with great expedition; and, tho' the night was extremely dark, arrived in London ſoon after break of day. According to the Captain's direction, I was placed in a convenient lodging in the city; the buſieſt place being judged the fitteſt for concealment. Idleneſs renders people curious: Theſe who have little buſineſs themſelves employ their time in obſerving others; and a vacant mind, empty of ideas, is always ſearching abroad for things foreign to itſelf, to fill the void; while the ſons of care and induſtry, and votaries of riches, are too good œconomiſts, even of

their

their thoughts, to throw them away where they can hope for no return of profit: They are ſo uſed to traffic, that they look on their attention as one of their commodities, which ſhould not be expended without conſiderable advantage.

I had reaſon to think the choice of my ſituation was well made. The people, with whom I lodged, beheld me in no other light, than as one who was to pay them a ſtipulated ſum weekly; and if they ſaw no reaſon to doubt my payment, nothing elſe in me could merit their attention. I came indeed at an unuſual hour; was very fine, and very dirty; having paſſed three days and nights in the ſame dreſs: But this was my buſineſs and not theirs; ſo they paid no regard to it.

I was void of all neceſſaries, and longed for the refreſhment of clean linen: and fortunately had ſufficient in my pocket to purchaſe it. For this I was obliged to a piece of careleſſneſs, for which I muſt have been angry with myſelf, if the conſequences had not excuſed it. I had given my maid a bank bill for thirty pounds, to get converted into caſh; wherein not having ſucceeded, ſhe gave it me juſt as I ſtepped out of the door. I was then going to Captain Turnham's lodgings; a proceeding which I was ſenſible was ſo wrong, that I could never do it without great flutter of ſpirits. In this hurry, I put it looſe into my pocket; having only juſt precaution enough to ſtuff it into my little pocket within my large one, made originally for my ſnuff-box. When the houſekeeper ſearched me, ſhe took my pocket-book and purſe, and whatever elſe ſhe liked, eſteeming it a lawful capture; but happily this little ſcrap of paper remained unfelt, and ſo became no part of the prize.

This was a great reſource to me; for tho' the Captain had ordered his ſervant to provide me with

with every thing I wanted, yet it would have been painful to me to have made ſuch immediate uſe of that liberty, as I knew his circumſtances were but narrow.

I purchaſed change of linen, and a gown leſs rich and gaudy, ready made; and tho' I ſtill was in a ſituation which would a week before have appeared dreadful to me; yet, when compared to the miſery I had ſuffered the three preceding days, it ſeemed tolerable, and I ſoon became able to take food and reſt; for I ſtood in great want of ſuch refreſhment.

The next day brought me a letter from Captain Turnham, filled with expreſſions of his impatience to come to me; but yet he acknowledged my commands were prudent. He informed me, that knowing me in ſafety, free from my brutal tyrants, gave him ſpirits enough to be one of the earlieſt abroad; and, with a compoſure, and eaſe of countenance and manner, which aſſiſted the deception we intended, he applied to the ſervant he had before bribed, to know what paſſed in Mr. Merton's family; and from him learnt that my eſcape was not diſcovered till near ten o'clock the next morning, the houſekeeper not finding leiſure to go before into the room.

Upon ſeeing the window open, and her priſoner miſſing, ſhe raiſed a great clamour, which brought up Mr. Merton: Then all the ſervants were called and examined; but no one being able to give any account of an event they all rejoiced in, it was immediately determined I was run away with Captain Turnham. This news was ſoon brought to the walks by a Lady, who had received it from her ſervant. The fact was denied by the perſon to whom ſhe related it, and who aſſured her ſhe had but juſt left the Captain in the public room

Upon

Upon this, many confuſed ſtories were raiſed; in none of which there was any truth, except that I was gone. Mr. Merton went to the inns, but could not hear of any equipage or horſes that had come there or gone from thence that night. He ſent to Tunbridge town, with as little ſucceſs.

Intirely at a loſs what to think, he carried proper officers, when the Captain was abroad, and ſearched his lodgings. After having thus perſuaded himſelf that I could not be gone from that place, he fancied I had got no farther than my legs could carry me, and ſent his ſervants different ways, to ſearch all the roads and fields as far as he thought it poſſible for me to ſtray. The ſervants agreed on an alehouſe for their rendezvous, where they ended their perquiſition; and were drinking ſucceſs to my eſcape, while their maſter imagined they were aſſiduouſly endeavouring to trace it. The houſekeeper was the only who did her office; ſhe had alſo undertaken the ſearch, and walked more that day than ſhe had done for three years before. Animated by rage, ſhe went on till ſhe was ſo ſpent, that ſhe was ſcarcely able to get home again, and remained very ill with her fatigue.

The reports ſhe gave of her little ſucceſs, and the unavailing labours of the reſt of the ſervants, which they ſet forth in ſtrong colours, having had ſufficient leiſure to ſettle their ſeveral marches, recommended them much to their maſter's favour, but gave him little ſatisfaction. He had no hope left, but that in a few days neceſſity muſt bring me out of my concealment.

This ſearch after me was known to the whole place; and curioſity made all the company as eager

ger to learn the event, as the perſon moſt concerned. There was not one who did not go to the back part of the houſe, though the road to it was very rugged, to ſee the window from whence I had made my eſcape. Some of them, ſurprized that Captain Turnham had not had the curioſity to look at it, carried him to ſee what a dreadful height it was.

No one appeared ſo anxious as he: "He had "the regard," he ſaid, "of an old acquaintance "and neighbour for me, and was ſincerely inte- "reſted in my fate; but ſhould be very miſera- "ble, if he thought the treatment I had received "could bear any reference to him; which he "thought impoſſible, as every one muſt ſee there "was no air of gallantry between us." Many agreed with him; others were convinced that jealouſy could not be without ſome cauſe. Thus the whole place was engaged in diſputes, which they were not likely to determine.

Mr. Merton eaſily conceived the window was too high for me to get out of without a ladder. He therefore went to every place where he ſuppoſed any were kept, to inquire if theirs had been uſed that night; but the Captain had bribed a man to get it out of his neighbour's yard; and leſt he ſhould have an opportunity of telling, bought his abſence from the place for a fortnight.

When the Captain heard Mr. Merton had ſearched his lodging, he thought it not conſiſtent with his character to ſuffer ſuch an outrage patiently; therefore he went to Mr. Merton, and enquired what reaſon he had for ſuch inſolence. Mr. Merton was too wiſe to chuſe to venture his life, for which he had no ſmall regard, becauſe he had loſt a wife he did not love; and, with due

meekneſs

meekneſs and civility, begged his pardon, if he had done what was not proper: But deſired him to conſider his caſe deſerved ſome allowance; for few men could bear to have a wife run away, without being turned a little beyond the bounds of reaſon and good manners.

"Very likely," replied the Captain; "but "why was I to be the perſon on whom this was "to fall?" Mr. Merton then told him, that he thought he had juſt reaſon to ſuſpect a criminal correſpondence between me and him, and mentioned the cauſe of his ſuſpicion.

The Captain acknowledged the fact, and accounted for it, by "having met me in a viſit, "from whence he offered to wait on me to the "public room; but in my way I fell down, and "hurt my ankle ſo much, that I could not im-"mediately walk; and being near his lodgings, "he helped me in there, and left me to rub it "with lavender water, which I had in my pock-"et, till I was ſufficiently relieved to be able to "proceed: That he would have ſent for a chair "for me; but it being only a ſtep to the walks, "I choſe, with leaning on him, to go there on "foot."

Mr. Merton did not think the Captain's word a ſufficient confutation of his ſuſpicions; but judged it more proper to appear ſatisfied, than to reſent. The extreme buſtle that aroſe from this incident had confounded the fact; every body ſuppoſing the action muſt be very flagrant, which was followed by ſuch conſequences. Thus the truth was dropped, and the various reports were ſo contradictory, that at laſt it became doubtful whether there was any foundation for all that had been done againſt me. Every man acquitted me in his own opinion; for each knowing me to have

have been reſerved to *him*, thought it impoſſible I ſhould not be ſo to all; for whoſe charms could be ſuperior?

CHAP. XIII.

—— While our former flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of power to ſin.

DRYDEN.

THO' I could no longer pretend to virtue, I was not ſo loſt to ſhame, but that I wiſhed to preſerve what reputation I had remaining: It could be but little; for every ſpot on a woman's fame is indelible. But there is a great difference in the ſituation of one whoſe character is ambiguous, and of her who has put it beyond all doubt.

I flattered myſelf, that if my parents would eſpouſe my cauſe, I might ſtill be preſerved from infamy, and obtain a ſeparate maintenance: Which, however ſmall, would have contented me.

As ſoon, therefore, as reſt had ſufficiently refreſhed me, I wrote my father an account of the whole of Mr. Merton's treatment of me, and of his outrageous jealouſy of Captain Turnham, ſo highly and ſo ſuddenly conceived; omitting no circumſtance which I hoped might plead in my favour; intreating his countenance and interceſſion towards procuring a ſeparation, which would not brand me with infamy, and bring ſhame on my family, as well as ruin on myſelf. I deſired him to direct his letter to one who was a friend of

Captain

Captain Turnham's ſervant, from whence he could fetch it; for I was not ſure enough of ſucceſs, to truſt my father with the knowledge of my abode.

Captain Turnham remained above a week at Tunbridge; from whence I heard from him regularly; and found, that as every day rendered the contradictions and abſurdities in the ſtories relating to me more palpable, it was ſtill poſſible that I might be acquitted by the generality of the world. This made me very impatient for my father's anſwer, on which it intirely depended; for without Mr. Merton could be brought to conſent to a ſeparation, and ſome allowance, I could not venture to ſhew myſelf to any one; but muſt ſkulk in corners like a criminal, for fear of falling again into the cruel hands from which I had eſcaped.

I had ſtrongly repreſented to my father the dreadful conſequences of his refuſal; and hoped the honour of his family, if no other conſideration availed, would obtain his concurrence: But when his anſwer came, I found I was miſtaken. He wrote me word, that "had Mr. Merton "been jealous of any other man than Captain "Turnham, he would not have determined a-"gainſt me without examining the caſe; but "the knowledge he had of my violent paſſion "for him, and his having followed me to Tun-"bridge, together with my averſion to my huſ-"band, convinced him ſo fully of my guilt, that "no other proof was wanting: That the honour "of the family, for which I pleaded, forbad his "ſhewing any countenance to her who would "diſgrace it; and that on that account, as well "as for a neceſſary example to the reſt of his "children, he diſclaimed me for ever."

This

This letter ſhocked me beyond deſcription. I valued my reputation highly, and now ſaw it loſt for ever. I was become the outcaſt of the world, Captain Turnham alone was willing to receive me; but I dreaded a dependence on a man whoſe eſteem could not equal his love; and how ſoon might general contempt extinguiſh his paſſion! All this I ſaw when it was too late.

In the bitterneſs of my ſoul I anſwered my father's letter; and repreſented to him, with all the anguiſh that I felt it, how he had totally effected my ruin, firſt by ſacrificing me forcibly to a wretch I hated, and muſt deſpiſe; and then by refuſing me a protection, which might have made me ſome recompence for his paſt cruelty. I then repreſented the inevitable infamy to which he conſigned me; I laid my vice and ſhame to his charge, and preſſed it home upon his conſcience.

I had juſt diſburthened my heart of ſome of its anguiſh, when Captain Turnham arrived, and revived me ſo much by his preſence, that I almoſt forgot my ſorrows. I had now given up all hopes of aſſiſtance from my family, and conſequently of preſerving my reputation; therefore endeavoured, as far as I was able, to baniſh all thoughts of it; and my lover, in order to contribute to my eaſe of mind, aſſiſted me in this attempt; whereby all the principle I had left was totally overthrown. While we keep a regard for the opinion of others; we have ſome remains of virtue; but ſhe who conſigns herſelf over not only to vice, but to ſhame, never fails of becoming abandoned: She is reduced to it in her own defence; for by no other means can ſhe obtain a moment's eaſe of mind, if that indolence of temper, which is the beſt ſtate ſuch an one can arrive at, can be called by the name of eaſe.

When

When every virtuous principle we have reproaches us, we are apt to employ all endeavours to extirpate them; and to deliver ourſelves from the pain our guilt inflicts by becoming more guilty. We fancy it will be a leſs labour to loſe the ſenſe of virtue, than to learn the practice of it: A great and fatal error! For we can never intirely tear our conſciences; and there are times when the moſt hardened ſeverely ſuffer for all the pleaſures their crimes have yielded them.

I experienced this truth in its full force. Tho' Captain Turnham's paſſion for me was unabated, and I loved him to diſtraction, yet I was not happy. But as few people can bear the melancholy of others, I concealed it as much as poſſible from him; and endeavoured to pleaſe him, by a chearfulneſs which was often a ſtranger to my heart. As his income was ſmall, I knew I muſt be a heavy burden on his purſe; and found I was likely to become ſtill more ſo. I therefore applied myſelf as much as poſſible to œconomy, as ſome relief to my pride, which ſuffered at the thought of being maintained at his expence.

We had lived together above half a year, without Mr. Merton's having been able to find out where we were, when Captain Turnham was ordered to quarters at Reading. This was a melancholy circumſtance to us, tho' no more than we had reaſon to expect ſooner. It affected us doubly: The expence of living ſeparate was more than could eaſily be afforded by the Captain's income; and we ſtill loved too well to bear to be aſunder, eſpecially when my ſituation rendered it more grievous, being then big with child; but it was too dangerous for me to venture to his quarters, as I might there be ſo eaſily found out.

We-

We were obliged then to part, tho' with the utmoſt regret; and as he was not able to get leave of abſence for more than a day at a time, while I could travel, we uſed to meet halfway; and, after the conſolation of a few hours of each other's company, returned to our reſpective homes. This was an expenſive indulgence; but when ſeeing each other was in queſtion, all œconomy was forgot.

When I lay-in, Captain Turnham preſſed for leave of abſence with ſuch importunity, that he obtained permiſſion for a whole week; during which his company enabled me to bear my ſickneſs with more content than health could give me in his abſence. He made me another viſit before my confinement was over; which, tho' but for a day, was a great cordial to my ſpirits.

The child I brought into the world was a boy, and my only pleaſure in his father's abſence, who ſeemed to look on him as an additional tie of affection to me. But he promiſed me much care and anxiety, being a weakly child.

When I had intirely recovered my lying-in, the Captain being taken ill, tho' of but a ſlight fever, intimated a great deſire to ſee me; upon which I went to Reading directly, and after ſtaying a week there, left him quite well; and we engaged to continue the practice of meeting half-way: In which ſhort journeys I flattered myſelf our little boy might ſafely accompany me, as the ſight of him would be an additional pleaſure to his father.

I returned in the ſtage-coach; wherein all my fellow-travellers were women. My heart had been heavy at parting with Captain Turnham; but as I drew nearer London, the expectation of ſeeing my little boy afforded me conſolation, tho' the thought of his ſickly frame mixed a little anxiety

xiety with it, not being free from fears that I might find him ſtill worſe than when I had laſt heard of him.

When we were within two miles of London, the coach was ſtopped by ſome men, who rode up to us We prepared for being robbed; and part of the company was exceſſively frighted: My purſe was near empty; and my apprehenſions were ſmall, till I perceived, amongſt thoſe I took for highwaymen, a ſervant of Mr. Merton's. This ſight threw me into the utmoſt terror; and it was immediately compleated by the approach of his coach, wherein I ſaw my huſband, and my bitter enemy his houſekeeper.

The coach-door was opened; and the ſervants, whoſe countenances expreſſed more compaſſion than ſuited their office, took hold of me to lift me out of the ſtage into Mr. Merton's. I gave a loud ſcream, and immediately fell into fits. My companions, terrified with ſuch a ſcene, ſcreamed too, with ſuch unwearied cries, that they were not over when I came to myſelf.

The ſervants, alarmed at the effect their attempt had on me, deſiſted; but as I recovered, I heard Mr. Merton curſing them for minding a woman's fits, and ordering them to take me as I was. They obeyed, and put me into the coach to him: On which my fits returned, and I was not ſenſible for many minutes at a time that day; which was therefore happier than many that ſucceeded it.

At night we arrived at an inn, where I was put to bed directly. I found the houſekeeper was to lie in the room; but for the preſent ſhe was content with locking me in, and went down ſtairs, not chuſing ſo irkſome an employment as attending

ing me in my fits, nor concerning herſelf what became of me in them.

I was ſenſible of one more attack; but am inclined to think that was all; for I burſt into a violent flood of tears, which relieved me; and my terrors were a little abated by finding myſelf alone.

Exceſſive terror, like exceſſive pain, brings itſelf ſome relief, by depriving us for a time of ſenſe. Tho' my fear was not ſo extreme, my miſery was now greater; ſince I had acquired the power of feeling it, by the recovery of my ſenſes. I had every thing to dread for myſelf from the hands into which I was fallen. When I conſidered the cruelty wherewith I had been treated on a bare ſuſpicion, what might I not expect when my offence was great and palpable! But this was not my only affliction; I was torn from the man I loved, Heaven knows! much better than myſelf: He would remain ignorant of what was become of me; perhaps think that the woman who had broke ſacred vows for him, had now violated thoſe ſolemn vows ſhe had ſo often made to him, and left him for ſome new lover: Or, if his heart ſtill did me juſtice, he would not be able to deliver me from this new ſlavery; for I could not doubt but entire care would be taken for the future to prevent a poſſibility of eſcape.

My child was another addition to my misfortunes: He wanted the tender care of a mother, to watch his infant weakneſs. I feared no one would well ſupply this place, now I was torn from him; nor knew I how to ſupport life in an entire ignorance of his exiſtence, which hung by ſo weak a thread.

How miſerable is that wretch, who in her misfortunes cannot pray to the only Being who has

has power to alleviate her diſtreſs! who, when the world appears armed againſt her, cannot have the conſolation of thinking ſhe has a friend in ſuperior manſions! and need not fear man, who can only kill her body, when ſhe knows there is One who will preſerve her ſoul; and if ſhe is thruſt with violence from this land of wretchedneſs, will receive her into everlaſting habitations, where the wicked ceaſe to trouble, and all tears are wiped from the eyes!

How far was I from this ſituation! I had offended as grievouſly againſt the laws of God, as againſt human inſtitutions; and if I conſidered him as a Being who beholds the works of the children of men, I muſt ſee myſelf the object of his wrath. I had therefore learned to think He regarded us but little; which had leſſened my terrors, but deprived me of all hope of relief from Him. And what could I expect from a ſorrow, which would not have been for my ſins, but for their conſequences: I could not give up the object of my affections; greater faith, and much divine grace, were requiſite to enable me to make ſuch a ſacrifice; therefore my thoughts durſt not wander beyond this world, where my proſpect was moſt wretched, without a glimmering of hope to chear me in the dreary road of affliction that lay open before me; and which I was conſcious I deſerved from the perſon who inflicted it.

CHAP. XIV.

I have been in ſuch a diſmal place,
Where joy ne'er enters, which the ſun ne'er chears;
Bound in with darkneſs, overſpread with damps!

DRYDEN.

MY gaoler required a great deal of refreſhment after the wearifome day ſhe had paſt; which prevented her coming to bed very early, and gave me leiſure to weep myſelf almoſt into a ſtate of ſtupefaction. This was the moſt deſirable condition I could be in. My perſecutor looked into my cloſe-drawn bed-curtains, and vented ſome reproaches; but ſeeing me ſcarcely ſenſible, ſhe would not throw away ſuch precious words, and went to her reſt.

As day began to break, I fell into more lively terrors, fearing I ſhould again be expoſed to ſee, and be ſeen by, Mr. Merton; which was the moſt dreadful circumſtance imaginable to me, as it occaſioned both the greateſt apprehenſions and ſelf-reproaches.

When my gaoler awaked, ſhe called to me to riſe. I was hardly able to obey her; ſo much was I ſpent with the violence of my fits the day before: But ſhe quickened my feeble motions with the harſheſt expreſſions; and fear reſtored part of the ſtrength of which it had deprived me. After frequent efforts, ſhe found it was impoſſible for me to get down-ſtairs without help; but not condeſcending to aſſiſt me, ſhe called two of the footmen, who ſupported me to the coach, and lifted

me into it; for the fear of ſeeing Mr. Merton there, as I approached it, deprived me entirely of the little ſtrength I had remaining.

Surely all mental ſufferings put together cannot make ſo great a ſum of miſery as a mixture of anxiety and fear, ſuch as I at that moment felt. I verily think, if Mr. Merton had then appeared, nature muſt have been totally overcome with the ſhock; but the ſhutting of the door after the houſekeeper got into the coach to me, gave me breath. I took it as an indication that we were to perform the reſt of our journey without him; but durſt not aſk if my hopes were well grounded.

Tho' I had been long expoſed to ſhame, yet, in the midſt of all my apprehenſions, I was not inſenſible of ſeeing myſelf a ſpectacle to every perſon in the inn, or belonging to it. They were all ſtanding in the yard to ſee me, with ſuch faces of eager curioſity, as expreſſed too little compaſſion for a wretch, who, however blameable, was now ſurely a melancholy object.

The ſilence I kept was an example not followed by my fellow-traveller; ſhe ſoon began to deſcant on my wickedneſs, and on my ingratitude to one who had taken me without a farthing, and made me miſtreſs of ſo many fine things. The charge againſt me was not put in terms moſt likely to affect me; but I had ſufficient cauſe for tears, and wept without uttering a ſyllable the whole day; great part of which ſhe paſſed in exerciſing on me her talent of abuſe: But ſleep was ſometimes my friend; for tho' it would not cloſe my eyelids, it did her's, and ſtopped the almoſt perpetual motion of her tongue.

I was ſo ignorant of the roads, that I did not know whether we were travelling that which led

to

to Mr. Merton's ſeat; but judged, by the diſtance it was at from London, that if we were bending our courſe that way, we muſt arrive there before night: On the contrary, as it grew duſk, we entered into another inn. I began to wonder where they were carrying me: I aſked the ſervant who helped me out of the coach, what town that was? But the anſwer only ſerved to ſhew me we were certainly not in the road to the place I moſt feared.

My goaler gueſſed the reaſon of my queſtion; and thinking I ſhould be more vexed at knowing the truth, than I was by my perplexity, ſhe ſatisfied my curioſity, as ſoon as we got into the inn, by telling me, "we were going to an old houſe "of Mr. Merton's; a proper place to be turned "into a priſon for ſuch a creature as I was: but "that indeed ſhe ſhould not ſtay in ſuch a doleful "hole any longer than till a proper perſon was "found to take care and keep me in order, till "law had procured a divorce, and left me to "ſtarve, or to lead ſuch ſhameful courſes as I had "begun."

The only part of this information which was not ſome relief to my ſpirits, was the laſt article. Sunk as I was in the world, I ſhuddered at the thought of being publickly branded with infamy by the law, and made the ſubject of all the ribaldry uſed on ſuch occaſions: But this was at ſome diſtance; and to learn that I ſhould not be again expoſed to the ſight of Mr. Merton, nor long be the ſport of this woman's cruelty, was a preſent ſatisfaction, and enabled me the better to perform the remainder of my journey, which ended the next day.

Before it was dark we deſcended a very ſteep hill; at the foot of it ſtood rather a ruin than a

houſe, to which we drove. "Here," ſaid my goaler, "you may remain to old age, if the walls "do not releaſe you from your captivity by fal-"ling down, and knocking your brains out." The alternative did not ſound very comfortable; but life appeared at that time of too little value, for me to view, with any great uneaſineſs, the tottering building which was become my habitation. In an happier ſtate it would have filled me with horrors; for half of it was already fallen, and much of the reſt ſupported with props, which did not appear adequate to the weight they were to ſuſtain.

The inſide of the houſe was not leſs ruinous. The wainſcot was rotted to pieces, and the wall, which appeared thro' the large holes decay had made in it, damp had covered with mould ſo thick, that each ſpot ſeemed a little wood; whereon the ſpiders, having taken advantage of the convenience it offered, had ſpread numberleſs webs. The floors were as decayed as the wainſcot, and ſo full of holes, that one could not walk but at the peril of one's limbs; and in many places the graſs had grown up to a tolerable height, and weeds flouriſhed moſt luxuriantly.

The ground round the houſe had once been a moat, but was now become a bog, wherein large families of frogs had fixed their abode, and kept a never-ceaſing croaking; which made a proper baſe to the pert chirp of the crickets, who inhabited the chimnies. To the muſic of theſe was added the whooting of two owls, who lived in an old yew-tree, juſt under my window, and contended with a neighbouring ſcreech-owl which ſhould moſt conſtantly ſerenade me.

All theſe animals, as if deſirous of entertaining the ſtranger who was juſt come amongſt them, were

were particularly ſonorous the firſt night; and to complete the whole, the houſe-dog, unuſed to be diſturbed by the arrival of equipages and horſes, was put into ſuch agitation, that he could not recompoſe his ſpirits, but howled without ceaſing till morning.

One would imagine, that a perſon, whoſe whole ſoul was ſo filled with inward agony, was incapable of being affected by outward circumſtances: But I experienced the contrary; for theſe I have mentioned turned grief into horror, and I could ſcarcely preſerve myſelf from diſtraction.

The inhabitants of this falling manſion were an old ſteward and his wife, and their only child, a young woman about nineteen years old, whoſe countenance expreſſed the ſimplicity of her country breeding, added to that of her youth and innocence, and at the ſame time indicated ſo much good-nature, that I thought, if I might have been allowed her company, it would have proved ſome little alleviation to my melancholy: But of this I had little hope; for my goalor would ſuffer no one to be in the room alone with me, tho' ſhe continually complained of the ſlavery of attending of me: Not with a great deal of reaſon; for ſhe never came into the room but at the neceſſary times of bringing me food; ſo that I was always obliged to ſit in the dark till ſupper, and the evenings were then grown pretty long, as it was in the beginning of November. Nor was I better provided with fire; for tho' I had little to do but to take care of it, yet it was with great difficulty I could keep it in; for ſhe would not let any coals be left in the room, nor any to be brought me but at the times I have mentioned. Depreſſion of ſpirits makes one cold, and the

ſeaſon was ſharp for the time of year; ſo that I was almoſt periſhed. And the dampneſs of my room gave me a very violent cold, which I could never get free from while I was there.

My windows had been nailed up before I came; but the cloſeneſs which might have been feared, was remedied by the great winds which came in, the caſements being very old, and the caſes of them much ſhattered. Indeed, the crevices round the whole room, were numerous; from all which I received moſt refreſhing breezes.

Great endeavours were uſed to render my food a means of mortification; for the little that was given me was of the very worſt ſort, and deſignedly dirty, which diſturbed me moſt; for as I had no appetite, it was very difficult for me to eat enough to keep me alive.

But none of theſe outward circumſtances, nor my tattered bed, which did not defend me from the air, nor the feather bed, which by damp was all clotted into great lumps, as hard as ſo many tennis-balls, and made my whole body ſore and almoſt black and blue, nor a thouſand other things, which would have appeared grievous to a mind at eaſe, gave me any pain, in compariſon of my anxious deſire to ſee Captain Turnham and my child, or at leaſt to know how they did, particularly the latter, whom my dreams, in the ſhort periods of ſleep I could obtain, repreſented continually to me as dead or dying; nor was my imagination when awake, much leſs cruel.

Perhaps, had I been permitted to take either air or exerciſe, or had any indulgence been allowed me which could have proved of a little ſervice to my health, or relief to my mind, I might have been better able to bear my ſorrows; but every thing round me was as diſmal as my own thoughts;

thoughts; and what refreſhment could I expect from ſleep, when my lullaby was a ſerenade of all the animals I have mentioned.

My deſpair was riſen to ſuch a pitch, that I was in continual fear of loſing my ſenſes. I was almoſt blind with crying and want of ſleep; and both my health and appearance were ſo affected, that I had reaſon to hope life would not long hold out againſt ſo ſevere a diſtreſs; but death, which ſeemed ſo deſirable to one in my condition, was rendered more dreadful by the thought of dying without a friend to cloſe my eyes, with no one whoſe compaſſion would endeavour to relieve my agonies, or whoſe affection would abate the ſenſe of pain; and if I conſidered death as a paſſage into an another world, the reflection was ſtill more horrible.

CHAP. XV.

—Tho' he poſted e'er ſo faſt,
His fear was greater than his haſte,
For Fear, tho' fleeter than the wind,
Believes 'tis always left behind.

HUD.

IN this ſituation I continued above three weeks, without any alteration, except an increaſe of ill humour in my goaler, who became every day more weary of her employment. Even the gratification of her ſpite and cruelty could not recompence her for the mortification ſhe received from the dulneſs of the place. She had indeed provided as well as ſhe could for herſelf. The

ſteward had repaired the corner of the houſe which he inhabited; and ſhe got a room in that part; indulged herſelf in a very plentiful table, and in every gratification the place could allow her: But ſtill it was too wretched a ſpot to be rendered tolerable by the brighteſt human invention.

I found, by what ſhe ſaid, that Mr. Merton had promiſed to relieve her from her poſt before that time, by ſending ſome other perſon to take care of me: But whether he had not been able to find a fit ſucceſſor (no eaſy taſk, I am ſure) or whether he was glad to get rid of us both at once, I cannot tell; but certain it is, ſhe received no intelligence of a ſubſtitute; which increaſed her ill-humour ſo much, that ſhe was ſtill more laviſh of her abuſe, and was more in the room with me for that purpoſe. The caſe was hard; for, however the law might eſteem Mr. Merton and I one, not two people certainly were ever more divided in fact; therefore I had little title to the whole ſum of fury, of which we were then become pretty equal objects.

Fretting, and the dampneſs of the place, at laſt proved my friends; for my goaler was taken with a fever, which, as ſhe was never negligent in care of herſelf, confined her to her room for ſome time. She tranſmitted the care of me to the ſteward's wife, who was a quiet woman, and often deputed her daughter to give me what ſhe thought neceſſary attendance.

My ſituation now began to mend: They were not only civil to me, but much more attentive to my convenience; and I became better accommodated in every reſpect: But the girl, whoſe name was Sally, deſired me not to mention to Madam, that they did not ſtrictly follow her example, as ſhe had commanded them.

I conceived

I conceived hopes, if not of effecting an eſcape, at leaſt of giving Captain Turnham ſome account of my ſituation, by Sally's aſſiſtance: I therefore took every occaſion of talking with her, and preſſed her to give me as much of her company as ſhe could. The good natured girl was ſo affected by the melancholy life I led, and by finding me always crying, that ſhe very readily complied. Her mother ſoon began to be alarmed, fearing, by the bad account ſhe had had of me, that I might corrupt her daughter; but Sally aſſured her I muſt be the beſt lady in the world; for ſhe never received ſo much good advice from any body.

This might well be true; no one is ſo capable of warning a young perſon againſt the errors into which youth and paſſion may lead them, as ſhe who has experienced all the diſtreſs which is the uſual conſequence. Whenever I had an opportunity, humanity led me to adviſe her to ſhun the rock on which all my happineſs had been ſhipwrecked; and one of the ſubjects of my lectures was a mercenary marriage, as I looked upon that as my firſt ſtep to ruin, tho' not a voluntary one.

In purſuance of the deſign I had on this young girl, I examined into what degree of dependence they had on Mr. Merton, and found it was pretty conſiderable. All they poſſeſſed was got in his ſervice; and that not being equal to what a ſteward's profits often are, they ſtill wiſhed a continuance of their employment, that they might increaſe the little fortune they had gained. This did not encourage my hopes; but as it was the only ſlender twig I could catch hold of, I was not willing eaſily to relinquiſh it.

I found Sally had a great curioſity to know my real hiſtory; which generoſity of nature inclined her to think was more favourable to me than my

perſecutor repreſented it. As I hoped for ſome advantage from her pity, I was not unwilling to ſatisfy her. I could not pretend to conceal my guilt; but endeavoured, as much as poſſible to ſuppreſs ſuch circumſtances as were moſt attrocious. I did not attempt to defend my actions; but the heavy ſufferings they had brought upon me, made them excite more compaſſion than cenſure. And the tears, which flowed during my narration, waſhed them pure in the eyes of the good-natured Sally. She wept with me, and appeared ſo touched at every circumſtance I mentioned, that I ſaw plainly her heart was not free. The tendereſt heart could not melt ſo feelingly for the pangs of a lover, if it had not been ſoftened by love.

I then drew her in to give me an account of the ſtate of her affections; and, by being her confidant, became a ſharer in them. I learned from her, that ſhe was not inſenſible to the addreſſes of a young farmer, who lived near ten miles off; but his fortune not being ſo good as her father and mother thought ſhe might expect, they made ſome oppoſition to their marriage, tho' not enough to diſcourage their hopes.

I took the firſt opportunity of ſetting before the eyes of Sally's mother the danger of diſappointing a young woman's affections, when there was no great impropriety in the indulgence of them: This my own misfortunes made a natural ſubject; and I could therefore do it without ſeeing to dictate to her. I was ſo earneſt in the cauſe, that it would have been hard if my arguments had been quite unavailing. I had the ſatisfaction of finding they made ſome impreſſion; and it ingratiated me ſo much with Sally, that I ventured to open my intentions to her, which were no leſs than

to get her lover to aſſiſt me in my eſcape. The propoſal was bold; but I underſtood that my perſecutor was ſo near recovered, that I had little time to effect it in.

Sally was ſtartled at the thought of ſuch an attempt: She knew her father's intereſt, and was unwilling her lover ſhould incur his diſpleaſure. It was difficult to obviate her objections, which were too juſt: However, I could not eaſily relinquiſh my hopes; and told her, that the diſtance he lived at would prevent his being ſuſpected; and that if he would bring a couple of horſes, one for me, and another for himſelf, I was a good rider, and the nights were long enough to allow us time to get a great way from home before day-light. My room was on the ground floor; and I thought it would not be impracticable to break the caſe of the caſements, which was extremely old; and by her account I found there was only a common lock to the door of the yard into which my window opened, and that he might eaſily take off.

My part could not be done without a good deal of noiſe; for old as the window was, it would require a great deal of force to break it: But the part of the houſe which was inhabited was ſo far from my room, that there was no great danger of being heard. To ſtrengthen the attack I made on Sally's humanity, I promiſed to give her lover ten guineas, if he would grant me the aſſiſtance I aſked. This I had the power of performing; for Captain Turnham had paid me twenty pounds the night before I left him; and, for fear of been robbed of a ſum I could not conveniently ſpare, I ſowed it within the lining of my ſtays, where it remained till I had this means offered me of laying it out for my liberty.

After

After many prayers and perſuaſions, I prevailed on Sally to write her lover the propoſal I had made her; to intimate that ſhe was deſirous he ſhould comply; and to let him know it muſt be effected the next night, as I ſhould have the power of making ſome progreſs in breaking down my window before the family went to reſt; which could not be done, if my goaler was able to come into my room; for ſhe examined every place moſt circumſpectly before ſhe went to bed.

Sally had a favourable anſwer to her letter: The young farmer conſented to an enterprize, which ſo well ſuited a lover, and was agreeable to his miſtreſs.

I found the taſk I had undertaken was more difficult than I expected; old as the wall was, it made great reſiſtance; and I had no inſtrument but a poker. After having fatigued myſelf almoſt to death, I began to deſpair of ſucceſs; and ſaw myſelf in danger of ſtill worſe treatment from the diſcovery of my deſign. My diſappointment was a ſufficient affliction; but this was an additional diſtreſs, and animated me to continue my attempt, till I loſt all ſtrength in my hands, and was reduced to ſit down in an agony of deſpair, which almoſt diſtracted me.

But my new knight-errant having waited at the door, from whence he had taken the lock, till he began to fear there was ſome miſtake, came into the yard, and paſt my window, which was open enough for him to hear me uttering part of my diſtreſs. Hereupon he endeavoured to aſſiſt me; and ſo ſucceſsfully, that he made a breach large enough for me to get out of it, tho' not without tearing both my cloaths and fleſh.

When

When this was once effected, we ſoon got on our horſes, and proceeded with the expedition of perſons who had every thing at ſtake. To avoid diſcovery, we took a croſs road, part of which was extremely bad; but the night was too dark for us to ſee danger, and my joy too great to ſuffer me to fear any; and my guide was uſed to all ſorts of roads. Our having taken this courſe made it longer before we came to a town; and I was not inclined to hire a chaiſe at the firſt we arrived at, as I thought, that, by avoiding to do ſo, I might eſcape my purſuers knowledge; for if they could hear nothing of me there, they would ſcarcely inquire farther on the ſame road.

Thus I lengthened my ride, and increaſed my fatigue; but it had the effect I deſired. When we got to the ſecond town, I gave my guide his reward, with a thouſand thanks, and many kind meſſages to the good-natured Sally, whoſe love's ſucceſs I heartily wiſhed; and made the young man promiſe to inform me of it, whenever their marriage was completed. I have had the ſatisfaction of hearing from him, that they attained their wiſhes, and were happy in the poſſeſſion of each other, and the enjoyment of eaſy circumſtances; both which he attributed, in great meaſure, to the money I had given him; a ſum he then had particular occaſion for, to enable him to buy ſome ſtock that was offered him for leſs than half the uſual price.

This circumſtance has led me to digreſs a little from myſelf, as it is an incident which gave me more ſatisfaction than moſt things that have befallen me.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Man is but man, inconſtant ſtill and various;
There's no to-morrow in him like to-day:
Perhaps the atoms, rolling in his brain,
Make him think honeſtly this preſent hour;
The next a ſwarm of baſe ungrateful thoughts
May mount aloft.———

DRYDEN.

THO' I was much tired with my ride, having been ſo long out of practice, yet I would not venture to allow myſelf any reſt till the night following, by which time I was not half a day's journey from London. I was unwilling to ſtop when I had got within that diſtance; but was ſo exceſſively weary, that even the earneſtneſs of my inclination could not enable me to go on.

The next day by noon I arrived in London; and going to the houſe where I had lodged with a beating heart, from my anxious expectation of ſeeing my child, if it was alive, I was told that Captain Turnham had ſent for it to Reading, and diſcharged the lodging. I did not think it adviſeable to ſtay in a place where I had been ſo long, and probably might have been diſcovered. I took another lodging, and wrote directly to Captain Turnham to inform him of all that had happened to me, and of my impatience to ſee him and my child; yet intimated my fear of coming to Reading, where all my wiſhes would carry me, leſt I might be as unfortunate in another viſit, as in the laſt.

Captain

Captain Turnham, on receiving my letter, was ſo impatient to ſee me, that, without waiting for permiſſion, he ordered his ſervant to give out that he was too ill to ſtir out of his room, and came poſt to London, where he was received by me with the ſincereſt joy; but his ſeemed greatly troubled, by obſerving me ſo emaciated and altered, as ſhocked him exceſſively.

It was great pleaſure to me, to find the Captain really glad of my return: I feared the inconvenience of being incumbered with me might incline him to wiſh to be quit of one, who could now have none of the charms of novelty. He was obliged to return to quarters the next day; but appointed to meet me at our uſual place of rendezvous, where he would bring his boy, and deliver him up to me.

This was performed; and I had again the pleaſure of indulging a mother's fondneſs over my helpleſs infant, whoſe health was improved under his father's care.

Nothing new happened in our ſituation, till I was again near lying-in of my third child; and then the regiment Captain Turnham was in, received orders to march into the moſt northern part of Scotland, where quarters were appointed them

Mr. Merton had juſt brought his cauſe to a concluſion; and a divorce was decreed him, ſufficient proof being brought of my having had a child after I left him: But Captain Turnham's prudent care prevented Mr. Merton's being able to bring witneſſes to accuſe him; and tho' no one doubted of the perſon, yet the law could not charge him. I had made no defence, nor appeared at all in it; all the pains Mr. Merton took could not diſcover where I was: But the proofs

were

were too ſtrong to require my confeſſion; therefore the cauſe was finiſhed without my preſence; which gave me liberty of living where I pleaſed, no one now having any power over me.

This freedom was very acceptable, as it enabled me to accompany Captain Turnham to his quarters; tho' the condition I was in rendered the thought of ſuch a journey very formidable; and I knew not whether the place where I was going would afford me tolerable aſſiſtance. But theſe conſiderations could have no great weight with one, to whom there was no other being exiſtent but Captain Turnham. I felt myſelf the outcaſt of the world: He was the only one I could expect ſhould look on me without contempt; and to have ſtaid in London, when he was ſo far off, would have appeared to me little leſs ſolitary than to have been placed in a deſart. Beſides, I felt the pains of dependance ſo ſenſibly, that I would have willingly endured much inconvenience, to leſſen the expence I was to Captain Turnham.

We had been but a little time ſettled in Scotland before I was brought to-bed of another boy. I rejoiced in the ſex of my children, as it ſaved me from all fears of their becoming as forlorn and wretched beings as their mother.

I had one comfort in this lying-in ſuperior to the others; and which more than compenſated the thouſand inconveniencies we were ſubject to in the place we then lived; Captain Turnham and I inhabited the ſame houſe, whereby I had much more of his company.

This, tho' a circumſtance then highly agreeable to me, was, upon the whole, I believe an evil. Moſt men are ſoon tired by poſſeſſion: Captain Turnham, endowed with more than common

common conſtancy, was proof againſt this general cure for above three years; and perhaps might have continued ſo much longer, had there remained any difficulties, or neceſſary concealments, in our commerce: but now it bore all the appearance of matrimony; we were eſtabliſhed in a ſettled menage; and as we were unknown in Scotland, we aſſumed the ſame name; and interchanged the appellations of huſband and wife, as freely as if the matrimonial ſervice had given us a title to them.

Our life was more domeſtic than is uſual in that ſtate; the place afforded no company to interrupt us; nor had either of us buſineſs to occaſion thoſe ſhort abſences, which are ſo well rewarded by the pleaſures of meeting. Captain Turnham was not fond of rural ſports; we were neither of us accuſtomed to read, ſo that we lived a conſtant *tête à tête*. Our children made our only variety; and, when they became capable of inſtruction, the teaching them afforded a little employment.

Love requires to be treated with great delicacy: Long ſeparations, or a conſtant courſe of various diſſipations, ſtarve it; and being always together, without interruption, or additional amuſement, is as apt to ſurfeit it. The right medium which ſhould be preſerved in theſe caſes, is ſeldom learnt but by the experience we gain from having fallen into one of the errors, and felt its fatal effects.

I have heard of a lady, who, jealous that the gentleman ſhe loved preferred another woman, contrived to ſhut them up for ſome time together, convinced indifference muſt be the conſequence; and ſhe thereby have room to hope for a return to her paſſion, when her lover's prepoſſeſſion in favour

vour of another was cured. I never heard a certain account of her ſucceſs; but am perſuaded it would ſeldom fail.

We are all ſo full of faults and follies, that we could no otherwiſe become the objects of a violent paſſion, but from the ignorance of thoſe who conceive it. They ſee us, when nature and art combine to ſhew us to the beſt advantage. The rugged temper can aſſume a ſmile of gentleneſs, and for a time wear as ſmooth a brow as if no ſtorm could ruffle it; the mercenary will appear diſintereſted; the avaricious put on the maſk of generoſity: In ſhort, there is no part a perſon cannot act for a ſeaſon, if they have but intermediate ſpaces, during which they can indulge their natural diſpoſition.

Thus, therefore, while we borrow the ſmiles and graces to render our perſons attractive, and aſſume the ſemblance of every virtue to confirm the charm, we are beloved equal to what we appear; and as we hide our imperfections, we lead captive every affection of the ſoul. But when, by being ſeen every hour, our follies and our frailties become conſpicuous, the love which was founded on a ſuppoſition we were free from them, muſt decay; and when we ſhew ourſelves ſubject to all the failings of mortality, we muſt expect to be loved with only a mortal paſſion, in which eternal conſtancy can have no ſhare.

Of this I was very ſenſible; but yet I could not avoid being greatly affected, when I ſaw Captain Turnham's fondneſs abate. I was always at work; his vivacity could not for ever be proof againſt a diſmal ſituation, and a total want of company. Converſation would flag, and even playing with his children would often become tedious. *Ennui*, that great deſtroyer of the happineſs of thoſe

thoſe who had no misfortunes to diſtreſs them, reached even our ſolitude, and oppreſſed Captain Turnham's ſpirits. I had no particular reaſon to complain; for he grew as weary of every thing about him, as of me; but the difference was, I only was ſenſible of it, and that to a great degree. His affection was the only thing in the world that could afford me any ſatisfaction; I had no treaſure but that, no friend but him, no one elſe to receive me, to ſupport me, or even to afford me the leaſt countenance.

I had placed my affections on him from my earlieſt youth; for him I had given up all the comforts affluence can beſtow; and, what was much more, to him I had ſacrificed my conſcience, my fortune and my fame. For all theſe bleſſings his love had appeared to me a ſufficient exchange; how much then muſt I have valued it! And in proportion you will eaſily imagine, my grief muſt be, at loſing it; for "if I loſt his love, I loſt my "all." This I could ſay with more propriety than it is generally applied, having, in reality nothing in this world beſide to enable me to endure my exiſtence.

CHAP. XVII.

And as pale ſickneſs does invade
Your frailer part, the breaches made
In that fair lodging, ſtill more clear
Make the bright gueſt, your ſoul appear.

WALLER.

IF I had been able to reflect ſeriouſly on Captain Turnham's behaviour, I ought to have thought myſelf fortunate in having ſo long enjoyed his affections: Few men ſhew ſo much conſtancy; but the fate of others ſeldom prepares us for our own.

Tho' I had cauſe to grieve, I had none to complain; for the Captain's indifference, which came by degrees, was only the common weakneſs of human nature: But he always behaved to me with regard and civility; and continued humane, tho' he ceaſed to be tender.

This was more conducive to his honour than to my peace; for my affection was unabated; and mere humanity is but an unſatisfactory return for extreme love. But I did not from this receive more pain than from my pride, which now felt I was ſupported by his charity: While he was attached to me, he was inſenſible to the diminution of his fortune; but when it continued to leſſen, without yielding him any gratification, he could not but be uneaſy at it.

For a long time I appeared blind to this alteration, fearing to turn indifference into diſlike, and that my company, which was now only dull to him,

him, ſhould become irkſome; but at laſt, when I ſaw he grew alarmed at the decreaſe of his fortune, I could not help offering to deliver him from ſo great a burden, aſſuring him that I had rather venture any diſtreſs, than bring him into difficulties.

Captain Turnham, with an appearance of real regard and generoſity, intreated me never to mention ſuch a thought any more; for that he would always ſhare his fortune with me; and felt too much gratitude for the attachment I had ſhewn him, ever to let me ſuffer by it, in any reſpect from which he could ſave me; and that if time had cooled his paſſion, nothing could ever extinguiſh his generoſity.

I could not deny there being a great deal in his proceeding; but the moſt delicate generoſity is known by few. A perſon may give much, and yet have a little of it. Vanity, a ſenſe of duty, or ſeveral other motives, may occaſion donations; but the truly generous will wiſh to conceal their bounty from the objects of it, and pretend ſome gratification to themſelves, in every thing they do for the good of another; they know that poverty gives pangs leſs ſharp than the humiliating benefactions of indelicate perſons. Nor ought an extreme ſenſibility, in this reſpect, to be called pride in the indigent; for to be without it would be meanneſs. The caſual gifts of the rich may be received without ſuffering; but none can endure a ſettled ſtate of dependance, that has a poſſibility of avoiding it, who has not a groveling mind.

What friendſhip beſtows, we receive with pleaſure; it proves the affection which we cheriſh; and while we feel the benefit of the effect, we rejoice

rejoice more in reflecting on the cauſe. Thoſe who love,

— In owing, owe not,
And are at once indebted and diſcharg'd.

Had Captain Turnham attributed his behaviour to friendſhip, which had ſucceeded to love, and which his conduct would well have warranted, I ſhould have more contentedly accepted his good offices; but when it was made the gift of generoſity, one only conſideration could make me continue the dependant on his bounty; and that was our children: I could not leave them; nor could he conſent to part with them. Indeed if he had, it was impoſſible for me to ſupport them and myſelf.

My love for them was accompanied with no alloy; for they returned it in the tendereſt manner; and made it impoſſible for me to leave them to the care of thoſe, who would feel none of a mother's fondneſs. This tie I fancied was all; but I have ſince learned, that my affection for Captain Turnham was ſtill ſo great, that tho' beheld by him with indifference, his abſence would have appeared ſtill a heavier misfortune.

We lived in our ſolitary ſituation four years, when we were rather removed than relieved: Captain Turnham, with the reſt of the regiment, being ordered to Gibraltar. There likewiſe I accompanied him.

This place, tho' not agreeable to the Captain, was leſs diſmal than that we left; but more ſo to me in one reſpect: For as we there met more who knew him and my hiſtory, I no longer appeared his wife; but was known for what I really was.

This

This ſhut me out of the company of all the women of any conſideration; and had another effect more diſagreeable to me; for in the dejected ſtate of my mind, I was not very fit for company. The gentlemen ſoon perceived, or naturally apprehended, that the Captain's love for me muſt be worn out: And whether women were ſcarce or ugly there I know not; but ſeveral were willing to deliver him of a miſtreſs, who they thought muſt be grown too much an incumbrance, for any addreſſes they could make to her, to be taken as an offence by him.

Amongſt the number who thought that the woman, whoſe frailty had rendered her the miſtreſs of one man, would not refuſe to be ſo to others, the moſt aſſiduous was a perſon of great diſtinction there. He offered me affluence and love, two bleſſings of which I ſenſibly felt the want; but the latter appeared to me deſirable only from one perſon; and I could not think of obtaining the other by proſtitution.

I had ſome reaſon to believe Captain Turnham would not have been ſorry, if I had proved more complying; but he ſeemed to honour my conſtancy, and reſpect the perſeverance with which I refuſed all that gentleman's propoſals. This was a great gratification to me: I flattered myſelf I had acquired his good opinion; this ſtrengthened me in my reſiſtance; for there was nothing I could not have ſuffered to fix his eſteem, which after my conduct appeared ſo difficult for me to obtain: but a man's vanity pleads in excuſe of the faults we commit for him; and his great idea of his own charms makes him think us leſs blameable, than if any other had been the occaſion of our frailty.

In the third year of our abode at Gibraltar, the Captain was ſeized with a fever; it was not violent, but tedious; and, after ſuffering a long time, he was at laſt as ſenſible as thoſe about him, that his death approached. I had nurſed him with the utmoſt aſſiduity; and the near proſpect of parting with me, and his children, rekindled his affection for me, and ſtill increaſed his for them. He lamented in the moſt pathetic terms, that he ſhould leave us deſtitute of any proviſion; tho' he had the ſatisfaction of reflecting, that this did not proceed from extravagance, but from the neceſſary expences of our family, which exceeded the income of his ſmall commiſſion, and by degrees had conſumed his whole fortune.

He aſked my pardon for the indifference he had ſhewn to me for ſeveral years paſt; and thanked me for my conſtant attachment to him, with ſo much tenderneſs as made me forget all his former coldneſs, and feel as much diſtraction at the approach of his diſſolution, as if his life was a certain ſource of happineſs.

It is ſcarcely poſſible to ſuffer a ſharper affliction than I did for his death; which was increaſed by the ſenſibility of my children, who were old enough to feel great grief for their father, tho' they were not apprized of the full extent of their loſs: Nor indeed were they capable of underſtanding it; for our affections generally come earlier than our prudence.

Upon examining the ſtate of the Captain's affairs, I found that his fortune was entirely ſpent; and there remained by us ſcarcely enough to diſcharge the expences of his funeral.

This could not but be an additional grief to the mother of three children, who began now to require education, and yet were far from being able

able to contribute towards their ſupport, the eldeſt being but nine years old. He had gone to ſchool from the time we came to Gibraltar; but he was now little likely to continue there.

As ſoon as Captain Turnham was dead, ſome of the perſons, who before had addreſſed me, renewed their propoſals; but they were accompanied with ſuch expreſſions of ſatisfaction in the deceaſe of their favoured rival, that they turned my indifference into deteſtation, and I rejected them all; ſhewing that the bare remembrance of a man ſo much more juſtly eſteemed by me, was ſufficient to fruſtrate all their hopes. In this I felt great ſatisfaction, as an exerciſe of my fidelity to him; which was my firſt wiſh, tho' I had no proſpect of a ſupport but from a continuance in the way of life to which I had been ſo long accuſtomed; but to perſevere in it for pecuniary motives, was very irkſome to me. To my romantic diſpoſition, love had given a ſort of ſanction to my actions; and tho' they were vicious, yet they appeared to me leſs mean, than thoſe of a mercenary proſtitute.

With this turn of mind, it is eaſy to imagine, that I could not determine on a courſe ſo odious to me, while I could ſubſiſt without it. Accordingly I ſold the little effects we had, and raiſed a ſmall ſum, on which I lived with the utmoſt frugality for ſome time, waiting an opportunity of returning to England.

CHAP. XVIII.

As th' Elm, which of its arms the ax bereaves,
New ſtrength and vigour from its wounds receives;
Their rage by loſs of blood is kindled more,
And with their guns, like hurricanes, they roar,
Like hurricanes, the knotted oaks they tear,
Scourge the vex'd ocean, and torment the air.

DEN.

I Thought myſelf very fortunate, when I heard that a Captain, with whom I had ſome acquaintance, was ordered to ſail for England. I had not ſeen him from the time of Captain Turnham's death; but on this occaſion I applied to him. I was not able to pay but little for my paſſage; and therefore addreſſed him with ſome fears of not ſucceeding; but was more fortunate than I could have hoped.

The Captain received me with the greateſt civility; and very politely aſſured me, that my company would render his voyage much more agreeable than he had expected to find it.

I thought it neceſſary to intimate, that I was very ſorry it was not in my power to make the return for the favour I aſked which I could wiſh; but ſhould be glad to know what would be required for my paſſage and my childrens.

To this the Captain very generouſly anſwered, He ſhould think himſelf overpaid by our company; for that he always found it very irkſome to be ſhut up with no other converſation than that of his ſhip's crew, which was not generally the moſt

agreeable,

agreeable. Tho' I preſſed his agreeing to accept what little I could pay, yet he continued the ſame aſſertion, and would not hear of any thing I could ſay againſt it.

This generoſity was ſo ſeaſonable a relief, as it afforded me a ſupport for ſome time, without taking from me the little remaining money I had, that I ſhould have accepted it without heſitation, had it not been for the peculiarity of my ſituation. I feared the Captain's bounty was not quite diſintereſted; and therefore could not take the benefit of it with ſo little ceremony as I ſhould otherwiſe have done; but was not ſorry that he perſiſted in his offer of conveying me at no expence to England, tho' I thought it proper to contend with him upon the ſubject.

Before we ſet out I had my ſuſpicions ſtrengthened: His attentions to me were beyond what common politeneſs dictates; and he ſhewed a fondneſs for my children, which I could not ſuppoſe he felt. However, I was not in a ſituation to ſtand on great delicacies; therefore I did not alter my purpoſe, which muſt have been attended with the greateſt inconveniencies.

After we put out to ſea, the Captain became more explicit in his addreſſes; and told me, that he had loved me during Mr. Turnham's life; but reſpected my attachment to him, and my great conſtancy, too much to attempt to obtain my favour: That my conduct to that gentleman had made his eſteem correſpond ſo well with his love, that it had fixed all his affections on me; and if he might be ſo happy as to ſucceed Mr. Turnham in my heart, I ſhould find that his gratitude and conſtancy were equal to my wiſhes, and he would look on my children as his own.

As this was a ſubject he often began, he com-

municated to me the views he had in favour of my children; which were ſo much to their advantage, and at the ſame time ſo practicable, that I had great reaſon to expect they muſt ſucceed. He promiſed me likewiſe, that if I would grant his ſuit, he would make a ſettlement on me as ſoon as we came on ſhore; and ſuch a proviſion for my children as ſhould ſecure plenty both to me and them, if death took him out of the world firſt.

This was greater good fortune than I could by any means have expected; and there was ſuch a viſible ſincerity in the Captain's manner, that I could not doubt his fulfilling his promiſe. This delivered me from all the ſolicitude to which I was before a prey, when I looked on my helpleſs children; and my heart felt a degree of compoſure, that I welcomed as a long abſent friend. But I was to be brought to true happineſs by the road of diſappointment and ſorrow.

One day in the afternoon, as we were ſitting in the Captain's cabbin, and playing with my children, of whom the Captain ſeemed as fond as if they were his own, we were alarmed with a cry, that a French man of war was coming towards us. The Captain immediately ran upon deck, and found it true. He prepared every thing for an attack; and had but juſt leiſure to ſtep down to me, and beg I would ſupport my ſpirits as well as I could, during a ſcene which muſt be ſhocking to one of my ſex; aſſuring me, that he did not doubt giving a good account of the French ſhip (that was his phraſe;) for his was a good one, and his men brave fellows.

The attack began ſoon after he left me; and was ſo very terrible, that I was ſcarcely in my ſenſes. I kept my three children embraced the whole

whole time, determined, if poſſible, that we would go together; for I imagined it probable a ball might reach us; but I was ſo ſtunned with the thunder of the guns, and ſo heartily frighted, that I was incapable of any farther thought.

But at once I was roufed by the Captain's being brought into the cabbin pale and bloody. They laid him down on the bed, and left him there. The ſpectacle filled me with horror and grief. My children ſcreamed with terrors, which added to mine; and the firſt moments were paſſed in diſtraction: But a recollection that there might be a poſſibility of aſſiſting him, brought me to my reaſon: I went to him, but found him without ſenſe or motion: However, hoping it might be only the conſequences of the great effuſion of blood, I tore my apron and handkerchief, to tie up his wounds. Before I had performed it, the ſurgeon came, who took my office out of my hands; but told me, that there were no hopes; for he believed one of the wounds was thro' his heart.

The ſurgeon was too right in his judgment; for the poor Captain never ſhewed any ſigns of life, tho' every thing was tried to revive him. This ſhock took from me all thought about the ſucceſs of the fight, and of any dangers to which I was expoſed, till loud huzzas made us ſenſible that our ſhip had obtained the victory; but, upon inquiry, it was too much ſhattered, and all were in ſuch confuſion from the Captain's death, that they thought it not proper to purſue the enemy far.

A reſolution I much approved: for the ſea was now become terrible to me; and my grief for the Captain was very ſincere; which will be eaſily believed, as my intereſt was ſo much concerned; for his death robbed me of the hopes on

which I had ſo firmly depended, both for myſelf and children: But all my affliction was not only on this account; for I had ſo great an eſteem for his generoſity, and ſo much gratitude for his humane intentions for me and my children, that I ſincerely regretted the loſs of ſo worthy a man.

The wind was fair; and it was not long before we got into port. The perſon who had been appointed adminiſtrator in caſe of the Captain's death, before he went abroad, when he made up the Captain's accounts, demanded of me the uſual price of a paſſenger; and as I had no proof of the Captain's generous intentions, I could not defend myſelf. The unexpectedneſs of his death had prevented his giving me any ſecurity in this reſpect, or of making any diſpoſition in my favour.

The demand upon me was greater than I had money to acquit. What I had, I offered; but the adminiſtrator would not believe it was my whole ſtock, and threatened me with impriſonment, if I did not advance the remainder. This was a dreadful ſituation: I had no redreſs in my power, and thought the hazard was too great to wait the event; ſo took the firſt opportunity of going on ſhore; and as we were then come to Deptford, a very ſhort time carried me and my children to London.

I wrote him word from thence that I had left the ſhip, not out of a deſire of depriving him of what money I had, but to ſave myſelf from being impriſoned for the payment of what I had not. I aſſerted the promiſe the Captain had given me of taking nothing for my paſſage; but at the ſame time offered to pay him all I poſſeſſed, if he inſiſted on it; and informed him where to direct a letter, to acquaint me with his reſolution; intending to take care that he ſhould not by that means find out where I was.

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The adminiſtrator now began to fear, that by too obſtinately requiring all he might demand, he ſhould loſe what he might get. He therefore diſpatched a letter to me directly, and offered me an acquittance on the terms I propoſed.

Thus the diſpute was ſettled, and I left without a ſhilling for the ſupport of myſelf and children. All the conſolation I had, was the liberty I had feared to loſe, and which now I began to think was more dreadful than impriſonment, as that would have obliged the perſon who put me there, to maintain me. Certainly thoſe muſt have a great love for freedom, who think it a recompence for the want of a ſubſiſtence; and indeed what liberty can a perſon in the utmoſt want boaſt of poſſeſſing? Neceſſity is the worſt bondage; it forces our wills, and enſlaves our bodies; it obliges us to do things moſt contrary to our choice.

CHAP. XIX.

Death only can be dreadful to the bad:
To innocence 'tis like a bug-bear, dreſs'd
To frighten children; Pull but off his maſk,
And he'll appear a friend.——

DRYDEN.

DESTITUTE of money and of hope, I was in the utmoſt diſtreſs of mind and body. My children, who had hitherto been a conſolation under all my misfortunes, were now my heavieſt grievance, as I felt their wants more ſenſibly than my own; and had no hope of being able to gain a ſupport for ſo many. This thought almoſt diſcouraged

couraged me from doing what I might, becauſe I knew it would not be ſufficient. However, preſſed by neceſſity, as much as by deſpair, I applied to my landlady to procure me ſome needle-work; the only thing I was capable of doing. My landlady, who kept a little ſhop, told me, ſhe had a good cuſtomer, from whom ſhe fancied I might receive employment; and went directly to aſk for ſome, and accordingly brought me a little.

I diſpatched this work with the utmoſt haſte a ſtarving perſon could make, to procure food for herſelf, and thoſe who were ſtill dearer to her, and prepared to carry it home; whereupon my landlady hinted, that at my return ſhe ſhould expect to receive what was paid me, in part of my week's lodging, which was then due.

This was a great damp on the joy I felt in going to claim the triſle I had gained; which was ſo little, as ſufficiently proved the impoſſibility of maintaining, with my own hands, myſelf and family. I had not long to indulge my reflections; and they were too melancholy for me to wiſh their continuance; for the houſe, to which I was to carry my work, was very near.

I was led in to the miſtreſs of it, whoſe appearance, as well as that of every thing about her, left me in no doubt of her occupation. She enquired into my circumſtances; which I told, with that readineſs wherewith the unhappy always relate their ſufferings.

She aſked me, if I thought it poſſible to maintain ſo many by my plain-work. I acknowledged I was ſenſible I could not; but could as yet think of no other means of livelihood. She then expatiated much on the advantages I might receive from a perſon remarkably engaging; an expreſſion

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you muſt attribute to flattery, becauſe there is now little appearance of it remaining; ſo great are the ravages made between that time and this, by a courſe of life, which deſtroyed my health, and tormented my mind; a period ſo odious to my remembrance, that I ſhall paſs over the relation as conciſely as poſſible.

I ſhall therefore omit the arguments this woman uſed, and thoſe ſtill ſtronger which were urged by neceſſity, to prevail on me to add other means for my ſupport to thoſe I had already begun. My children were too great an incumbrance for her to wiſh to have me in her houſe: Her offers were more advantageous, as ſhe left me at my liberty; and only claimed half what was given me. Upon the ſtrength of this agreement, ſhe was ſure to procure a conſiderable price for me; and tho' the bloom of youth was paſt, yet ſhe compoſed ſo fine a romance for me, as gave a dignity to my appearance; which anſwered her purpoſe entirely, and conſequently was equally profitable to me.

I had now a ſufficient maintenance; but the vileneſs of the means whereby I gained it, rendered me miſerable. I deſpiſed myſelf, and deteſted every one I converſed with; for I was excluded from the ſociety of any but the moſt profligate and abandoned. They indeed thought my ſituation worthy their envy; becauſe I enjoyed my liberty, as they called it, and had a great ſhare in the product of my vices; whereas they were only maintained as ſlaves; and had as little the command of themſelves, as if they were ſuch. But I was too wretched to perceive this preference; and was no leſs unhappy than they were, tho' perhaps with leſs apparent reaſon.

The extreme melancholy which this courſe of life

life brought upon me, agreed very well with the romance the old bawd invented for me, and gave it an air of truth; and a diſtinction to me, which ſet me much above the reſt. As diſagreeable as the ſight of the wretched is to moſt people, yet there was ſomething ſo new and ſurprizing, to ſee a woman, oppreſſed with melancholy, among a crew, where the moſt diſſolute wantonneſs, the moſt frantic mirth, and abandoned licentiouſneſs of manners reigned, that it had a great charm for many, and made them ſuppoſe there muſt be ſomething very peculiar in the fate of a woman, who could cloath profligacy in the garb of modeſty and afflicted virtue.

During this time, my eldeſt ſon died, and the ſecond's health daily declined, and filled me with continual alarms. I had kept both of them at ſchool from the time I was able to afford it. Their maſter was a man of very rigid piety, and a good ſcholar. The forward genius's of both theſe children charmed him: They learned ſo faſt, that he thought they deſerved his particular attention, and took more than common pains with them.

As he conceived it of ſtill more conſequence to inſtil religious principles into their tender minds, than to fill them with learning, his greateſt care was employed in inſtructing them in their religion; he taught them both the faith and practice of chriſtianity; and was delighted to ſee with what attention his little pupils liſtened to him, and how well they remembered all his doctrine.

The effect was greatly exemplified in the death of the eldeſt, who, with uncommon ſagacity, perceived his end approaching, and bore it with amazing compoſure. Seeing me in the deepeſt affliction, he endeavoured to offer me all the conſolation his

principles

principles could dictate. He begged me not to grieve for him; for "he hoped he was going to "a better world: That I had often told them "how deſtitute their condition was; but that he "was now haſtening to a place, where all his wants "would be ſupplied: That he was ſorry to leave "ſo affectionate a mother; but received great "comfort from thinking he was going to a merci-"ful and indulgent father; to him, *who had ſo* "*loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,* "*to the end we might not periſh, but have everlaſt-*"*ing life*; and hoped to be received by that Son, "the God of mercy and love."

He then gave his brother much good advice, intreating him "ſince he might not, like himſelf, "have the bleſſing of being taken ſo ea ly out of "a wicked world, to guard againſt all the tempta-"tions of it; to bear afflictions, pain, and diſtreſs "of every kind; to endure all that man can in-"flict, rather than offend his Maker and Redeem-"er." He repreſented, "how dreadful it muſt "be for thoſe to fall into the hands of the living "God, who have nothing but wrath to expect."

A long time, like one inſpired, did he expatiate on this ſubject, intending to warn his brother from the evil he might fall into; but how much more did his words affect me! His brother received his advice with ſatisfaction; had nothing to repent of, and reſolved to regulate his conduct by it; but it filled me with horror and remorſe. I felt, that they were my ſins which deprived me of ſuch an angel, before he knew the deplorable wickedneſs of his mother; which, to his divine diſpoſition, muſt have been far worſe than death.

After he had ſaid all that he thought could be uſeful to me, or his brother, he begg'd the latter

to requeſt his ſchool-maſter's preſence; and that, as an additional obligation to all he had conferred upon him, he would come and pray by him.

The good man complied, and came directly. My ſon aſked his pardon for giving him that trouble; but told him, "he thought he ſhould pray "with more ſatisfaction, and freedom of ſpirit, "if he aſſiſted him, than if any other performed "that office; and had reaſon to believe his humanity would readily grant that favour to one "whom he had bleſſed with ſo much of his care, "and ſo many admirable inſtructions"

The good man burſt into tears at ſo affecting a ſcene, and aſſured him, "he looked upon the re-"queſt, for which he apologized, as the higheſt "obligation; and found his heart both warmed "and edified by his behaviour."

My ſon then told him, he had one thing to wiſh, if it was not improper. "He ſhould feel "great joy, if he might receive the ſacrament; "but, if the Doctor judged him too young, as "he feared he was, he begged he would not, to "comply with that inclination, indulge him in "any thing to which he thought it a preſumption "in him to pretend."

The Doctor replied, that "tho' his age ſeem-"ed unfit, yet his underſtanding was ſo perfect, "and his principles ſo pure, that he had no ob-"jection; on the contrary, ſhould receive great "ſatisfaction from adminiſtring it to him; but "feared too long a ſervice might oppreſs him."

The poor boy aſſured him, "that, ſo far from "it, he muſt beg he would read both the office "for the dying, and the whole communion ſer-"vice; for it would refreſh rather than fatigue "him; and he wiſhed death might find him at

"prayers,

" prayers, that he might die, as he would riſe " again, praiſing and adoring God."

The good man deſired to have every thing prepared directly, and, till his office began, indulged his tenderneſs, which made him grieve for my child as if he had been his own.

He turned to me, and told me " he ſuppoſed I " would partake of the communion with my ſon," and began the ſervice not waiting for my anſwer. I felt myſelf not fit for ſo ſolemn an act of devotion, but knew not how to avoid it. I therefore conformed; but as the ſervice proceeded, it awakened my conſcience to ſo bitter a ſenſe of my wickedneſs, that I fell into ſuch an agony of horror at the thought of my iniquity, that I could not attempt to join in an act of worſhip with perſons ſo unlike myſelf. I therefore, as obliged by the condition I was in, retired.

When the ſervice was over, the old gentleman came to me: Suppoſing the agony which had ſeized me proceeded from my tenderneſs for my child, he meant to offer me ſome conſolation. Accordingly he congratulated me " on having a ſon whoſe " exemplary piety, at an age when few think of " religion, was ſo greatly edifying; and that when " he conſidered his extreme youth he ſhould be " apt to believe him ſupernatural, if his brother " was not as extraordinary for his years." He endeavoured to perſuade me that his death did not come too ſoon, ſince it would lead him to a glorious and bleſſed eternity.

He then ſhewed me how happy it was to be taken out of the world before he was tainted with the vices of it; and repreſented the danger to which he would have been expoſed had he lived to a maturer age, in colours which ſet my own crimes in ſo

ſtrong a light, that while he leſſened my grief for my ſon, he increaſed my affliction for myſelf.

He was interrupted by being again called by the poor boy; who, finding himſelf fail very faſt, begged him to pray again; and while he did ſo, he expired without a groan, with a ſmile of joy on his countenance, and hands lifted up in prayer.

I was now paſt liſtening to any conſolation; ſo the good man left me, and went away, praying that all preſent might have as happy an end to this life, and as bleſſed a beginning to the next as he made no doubt this youth had.

My conſcience was too much awakened, to ſuffer me to continue my diſſolute life: But I knew not by what means to ſubſiſt: However, as I had a trifle by me, I allowed myſelf time to reflect on all that offered itſelf to my thoughts.

I had heard of the inſtitution of this Aſylum; but my children appeared to me an unſurmountable obſtruction. I then fancied, that this good ſchool-maſter was ſo excellent a man, that, perhaps, if I confeſſed all my crimes, and told him that my children only prevented me from taking refuge here, he might poſſibly aſſiſt me in getting them off my hands, rather than hazard my being tempted to continue in a way of life ſo pernicious both to ſoul and body; tho', when the one is concerned, the other does not deſerve the leaſt conſideration.

This thought occurred to me, as I was attending my children in a walk a little way out of town, which I had begun to practiſe, in hopes the air might be of ſervice to the poor boy, who was now become my eldeſt ſon.

As I was forming the plan on which I ſhould purſue the ſcheme, which appeared the only one that

that offered me a means of reformation, I paſſed by ſome children playing. The neatneſs of their dreſs, and the orderly manner they appeared in, tempted me to inquire who they were, and was told, they were the offspring of penitents who had been, or were juſt going to be, received into the Magdalen-Houſe; ſome of their mothers being detained out of it by ſickneſs.

This awakened a moſt pleaſing hope in me. On enquiry, I found the moſt humane Inſtitutors of this charity did not object to the additional charge of children, ſince it doubled the benefit they conferred. I could not forbear examining into the care that was taken of theſe helpleſs infants; and was charmed to find how plentifully all their neceſſities were ſupplied, and the ſtill greater attention that was paid to the cultivation of their minds, that they might be inſtructed to avoid all the vices which had occaſioned their parents deſtruction, and the great danger their children had incurred of being no leſs unfortunate.

I let ſlip no time in preſenting myſelf to this Hoſpital: I attended the meeting the next day; and was ſoon received, and my children taken care of.

Here has all my misfortunes ended; and here I hope, by repentance, to waſh out my ſins. The hope of mercy is my conſolation; and great as my offences are, I know Divine mercy is greater; and that can pardon what is too atrocious to be expiated by repentance; but my life ſhall paſs in petitions for that grace, which, by aſking for, we are aſſured we may obtain; and in praying for, and bleſſing, thoſe who have offered me, and wretches like me, the power and means of reformation.

If, as we are told, thoſe who ſave a ſoul ſhall ſhine like the ſtars in heaven, how bright muſt be that glory, which is reſerved for the beneficent Inſtitutors of this charity! They have found out a means for finite beings to do infinite benefit; ſince the good they have conferred on us will reach through all eternity; but their happineſs therein exceeds ours, how great ſoever it may be, as much as it is *more bleſſed to give than to receive.*

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End of the Second and Laſt Volume.